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THE NEW TECHNIQUE
OF SCREEN WRITING

BOOKS BY
TAMAR LANE

Hollywood and the Movies

What's Wrong with the Movies?

Professional Movie Tricks

The Fighting Heart

Hey Diddle Diddle

THE NEW TECHNIQUE OF SCREEN WRITING

A Practical Guide to the Writing and Marketing of Photoplays

BY

TAMAR LANE

Editor, Scenarist, Executive, in Association with
RKO, Universal, First National, Pathe,
Paramount, Selznick, and
Other Studios

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Preface

THE aim of the present volume is to deal, not solely with theories—although this angle has not been entirely neglected—but with concrete facts and conditions as they must be met and overcome by the writer who hopes to succeed commercially in the cinema field.

Its purpose is not merely to explain how screen manuscripts should be written, but to show how it is done in the studios themselves.

With these ends in view the endeavor has been made to present considerable information of a practical and commercial nature, including professional hints and practices of the trained and expert scenarists resident in Hollywood, or under contract to the various studios. Many of the data herein offered have, so far as the author is aware, never before been published.

No comprehensive treatise on the photoplay has been published since the inauguration of the talking picture. It is felt that there is a definite need for such a work.

Learning how to write for the screen is one thing, but what to do with completed manuscripts after they are written is another and equally important matter, seldom adequately dealt with in books concerned with the photoplaywright's craft. Both these angles are herein covered.

In addition, there are included in the latter half of the volume professional specimen manuscripts of: (1) An *original screen story;* (2) a *treatment* or *adaptation;* (3) a detailed *shooting continuity.*

Gone are the days when any untrained individual believed he could sell a scenario by simply jotting down a meagre plot outline with paper and pencil and mailing it to a studio. The introduction of dialogue terminated this illusion. With only a very few exceptions, those who today wish to essay the task of creating cinema manuscripts must of necessity give much time and thought to a thorough study of the new studio demands.

This volume, I believe, will prove helpful not only to those in the elementary stages of screen writing, but to experienced authors and playwrights in other fields, who are nevertheless untrained in the rather complex and unique methods of writing and selling screen manuscripts.

TAMAR LANE.

HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.
August, 1936.

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PART ONE

CHAPTER I

The New Cinema Form

THE introduction of sound and dialogue into the cinema not only drastically altered the appeal of the motion picture as far as the public is concerned, but brought about radical changes in the preparation and writing of the photoplay.

Many of these changes were unnecessary, and are still unnecessary, but this does not alter the fact that they exist. They have been established and fostered by the studios and must be faced, for the time at least, by writers who desire to sell their stories or talents, and grapple with the professional cinema in a practical way.

To begin with, in the days of the silent drama, the appeal had been solely to the eye. Scenarios were created and written with the sole objective of visible appeal, *how they would look upon the screen.* All story and situation values were prepared for the purpose of making them *optically* attractive and convincing. This principle applied throughout, whether the situations were dramatic, humorous, or romantic.

The introduction of sound meant that an entirely new cinema element must now be considered and dealt with—the *audible* effect of the film. In other words, where the writer formerly had to consider merely one element, the *visible* effect, in the preparation of his script, he must now contend with two elements, an appeal to the *ear* as well as the *eye.*

This immediately altered not only the technique of the physical preparation of the script, but it called for new forms, new technique, and new creative ability in the conception and composition of photoplays in sound form. It meant that screen writers in future must visualize their scenarios along entirely different lines. They must think in terms of *sound* as well as *sight*. This called for fresh and hitherto unnecessary talents. Many of the old practices and formulas had to be tossed aside and a new type of photoplay construction devised.

The elimination of the subtitle and the substitution in its place of spoken dialogue brought many advantages, but it quickly became apparent that this radical change also resulted in many annoyances and handicaps. For the *written title* was not only the early method of conveying dialogue in the inaudible film, but it was the screen writer's most useful and flexible device, as well as the film editor's best friend in matters of pruning, doctoring, or speeding up a motion picture.

With the subtitle, the writer or editor could make drastic changes at any time during the shooting of a film, or after it had been completed. If, after a film had been shot, it was found to be slow, faulty, or ineffective in any of its scenes or situations, this could generally be remedied by the writing of new titles. Different words would be written into the mouths of the silent characters to improve the written dialogue, and descriptive or abstract titles would be written to fill in gaps, explain away any inconsistencies, build up the drama, and smooth out the production as a whole.

Many pictures that were slow, tedious, or inferior after the camera shooting had been completed in the old silent-drama days were later improved by new and cleverly written titles to such an extent that they were altered into highly successful productions. It was even possible to change the very subject matter about which the characters were talking. In some instances whole sequences were lifted bodily from one part of a picture and transferred to an earlier or later part of the film by means of some explanatory titles. But, more important, if any scene, upon being viewed in the studio projection room, appeared slow or too drawn out, footage could be eliminated in any part of the scene desired and this elimination be covered by a title.

The introduction of sound changed this. Once a script has now been completed and turned over to the director for shooting, very few alterations can be made in it. The talking picture, as far as juggling or rearranging the continuity or dialogue are concerned, is practically an inflexible institution. True, on the set while a scene is being rehearsed just prior to being shot, certain changes can be made with a particular speech. But this is in regard to minor details and bits of dialogue. To attempt to make radical changes in dialogue during the filming of a story is dangerous and is apt to mar the smoothness and tempo of the continuity. It has proved a very faulty procedure and is today seldom tried by the studios.

Also, when the camera work on the talking picture is finally completed and the film, after its first editing, is found to be slow or faulty, it is now a difficult matter to alter or speed up the story with the ease that existed in the case of the silent picture and its written titles. The dialogue, once recorded, cannot be changed or doctored except in a very minor degree. The film editor has a few tricks or artifices he can resort to; but the picture, in substance, must stand pretty much as it was filmed. No new words, generally speaking, can be inserted into the mouths of the players, nor is there any important means by which certain inconsistencies or weaknesses can be easily explained or corrected, as could be done in the silent drama by means of subtitles.

In the event that a completed film is so slow or faulty that it seems destined for certain failure if released to the public in its present shape, then the studio today has only one alternative: the inferior scenes or sequences of the production must be completely rewritten and refilmed. This is very costly both in time and in money. While in the silent-drama days the studios sometimes resorted to reshooting, this practice was not nearly so common nor half so expensive as is the case with the talking picture. There have been cases in which studios were forced to expend $100,000, and even as high as $200,000, in remaking sound films; $50,000 is a quite common outlay in this regard.

Another factor which now compels the utmost care and exactness in attempting to create a perfect script is found in the fact that today all films are run in every theatre at exactly the same speed. The exhibitor or projectionist cannot speed up or slow down a film in the projection machine as he did in the silent era.

Formerly, when a film, or a certain part of a film, was slow in action, the projectionist overcame this by speeding up the running of the film. Today all films are run at a fixed speed throughout. This is due to a technical limitation in regard to the recording of sound. All sound and dialogue are keyed in pitch to a certain speed in the running of the film. To either quicken or lessen the speed of the projection machine distorts the sound and makes it at once unnatural and out of key.

Therefore, in creating his script, the scenarist today must endeavor to write his action and dialogue so that they will move with the identical tempo that will be needed for best results when the picture is ready for running in the theatres throughout the land. Here again, it is important to note, there are only limited ways to overcome any deficiencies in tempo which existed in the shooting script. (A little further on I shall offer more comment on that most important element, *tempo*.)

So the screen writer today faces a new and more exacting situation. The producer demands that his shooting scripts be as near perfection as possible before the camera work begins. Every scene, every sequence, both as regards action and dialogue, must be weighed and prepared with an exactness that will require no changing after the script has once been turned over to the director. This applies to the final shooting script, of course, not to an original story submitted for consideration.

This, at least, is the *theory* upon which scripts are, or should be, written today. The scenarist who could formerly write his script with a certain amount of roughness, knowing that titles and action could be altered later if desired, must now endeavor to create his script with the smoothness and precision that will be demanded of, and seen in, the finished photoplay.

In practice, however, most studios are not carrying this principle out with anything near the strictness that the successful production of talking pictures demands. From the foregoing comment, it can be seen that, under the reign of the talking picture, the time to edit a photoplay is *before* the script has been placed on the shooting schedule. Every shooting continuity, just prior to being placed into production, should be turned over to special script editors to be rigidly analyzed and weeded of all superfluous scenes, action, and dialogue. The cost of eliminating extraneous matter and improving the effectiveness of a scenario at this time is small indeed as compared with the expense entailed in shooting the unnecessary material and then later throwing it in the refuse bins.

When I speak of editing a photoplay before it is placed into actual production work, this reference must not be confused with, nor regarded as identical to, the business of cutting and editing a film after it has been completed, although the two activities can be of service to each other. Over the first form of editing the screen writer has some control; over the latter form of editing the writer has no control whatsoever. The final editing of a completed production is done by an entirely different group of workers, known as film editors. The editing problem is covered in more detail in the chapter "Tempo and Rhythm." What I am stressing here is that the studio or writer, by a careful pruning of continuities *before* camera work has started, can aid in eliminating many of the customary film-cutting problems that crop up later.

A few producers do practice this careful prepruning system, but they are far in the minority. Three out of every four films placed in production today are still loaded with unnecessary dialogue and footage that a close analysis of the script would reveal as destined to be clipped out and tossed on the cutting-room floor by the film editor. It is a faulty system and an extravagance that will some day be overcome as the studios gradually adopt new principles in the creating of their scripts.

The elimination of the old silent subtitles also presented writers with another problem—the necessity for creation of time lapses by means of action rather than captions. The passing of an hour, a day, a month, or a year was formerly covered with ease by the insertion of a title telling the lapse of time. Under the new form, time lapses must now be conveyed by some other means, for subtitles, except in very extreme instances, can no longer be used for this purpose.

This presents both a test and an opportunity for the writer's inventive abilities, and as such is a marked improvement over the crude and stereotyped captions: "Next morning," "One year later," etc. Clocks, calendars, diaries, and other objects are very much used today to get across a definite period which has elapsed between scenes. Other and more varied means have also begun to make their appearance upon the screen. There is an excellent field for creative writing in this respect. Its possibilities and ramifications are dealt with in a special chapter.

In the silent form, the screen writer built his characters, rounded them out, gave them individuality or personality, by means of titles and also by what were termed "character touches." As the silent drama progressed, the better writers came to rely almost solely upon character touches for effect, because it was the more legitimate and creative use of the photographic medium.

Since the arrival of the talking picture, writers now depend largely upon the playwright's favorite device, *dialogue*, to develop and set forth their characters. This is lamentable and is a definite setback for the cinema as a distinctive art form. While it is quite legitimate to use dialogue to some extent to build individual characters, it is certainly not making full or proper use of the photoplay medium, nor is it adopting the most effective means, when writers, such as is the case today, resort solely to dialogue to give their characters blood, bone, and individuality; yet this is what most of our present films do.

In this respect the cinema has lost considerable ground since the inauguration of the talking picture. In their enthusiasm for the new sound era the writers and producers have come to lean too heavily upon sound. In the latter days of the silent picture the writers were evincing marked advancement in the creation of new and distinct photoplay technique. The creative and inventive ability of many scenarists had progressed to such an extent that by the injection of one or two character touches, or idiosyncrasies, they were able to reveal more about the inner working and soul of a character than could be explained by two pages of description or a yard of dialogue.

These vital, human bits of business were further advanced by such writer-directors as Ernst Lubitsch, and so effective and compelling were such pictorial highlights that the "Lubitsch touch" became a cinema byword throughout the world.

That these human touches and bits of pictorial character development should be ignored or tossed aside simply because of the addition of dialogue to the films not only means a weakening of photoplay technique, but is a rather silly and shortsighted attitude upon the part of producers. Sound and dialogue should be used in every way possible to enhance cinema values and broaden the photoplay's scope, but this does not mean that there should be an indiscriminate casting off of all previous forms of screen-writing technique, many of which are of extreme value and an inherent part of the photoplay art. There is ample room and reason for the employment of both pictorial and audible values. *The ideal ar-*

rangement is a skillful blending of the two. Intelligent and farseeing writers of the future will aim at this mark.

Another of the most important changes in writing technique brought on by the talking picture has been the gradual speeding up and breaking up demanded of scenarists in their treatment of the script. The writing and preparation of a scenario for shooting is today quite different in both form and treatment than it was formerly.

When the talking-picture era first thrust itself upon the film world, the producers and workers proceeded cautiously and under many handicaps. They were entering a new field. For the first few months it was necessary to keep the microphone in one place, and the players were compelled to remain in close range of it; otherwise their voices could not be heard. The microphones were immovable, of inferior quality, and of short-range power. Consequently the players were merely planted in a set, grouped closely about the "mike," and proceeded to go through entire scenes of hundreds of feet in length without the camera's moving once. Occasionally a medium close-up would be used, in which case the close-up would run for 50 to 100 feet while another long scene went through on the screen minus interruption. The monotony and unnaturalness of these early talkies was dreadful, and only tolerated by the public because of the novelty of hearing players talk.

Then microphones were improved in sensitiveness and fidelity and it became possible for players to move about the set more freely without getting out of mike range. This gave more movement and action to the scenes. The players could walk up and down the stage instead of remaining grouped in one spot, but the camera still remained in one place and the scenes themselves were consequently almost as long as before.

Next, the movable microphone was perfected. By means of booms, trucks, and "dollies," it was at last possible not only for the characters to move about, but for the mike as well as the camera to follow them anywhere, or swing away from them and pick up action and dialogue of another player or group of players elsewhere on the set, in close-up or long shot. At last the talking picture now allowed of as great a freedom in shooting as existed with the silent film. Scenes became much the same in camera movement as existed before the advent of sound.

Despite all this advancement, shrewd producers later sensed that when scenes in talking pictures were played in the same length and tempo that ruled in the days of the silent drama, *there was still a tendency toward dragginess and monotony.*

Audiences grow tired and restless far more quickly with a talking picture than they did with a silent film. The necessity for the concentration of their ears as well as their eyes, two senses instead of one, is a greater strain upon the nervous energy and produces speedier exhaustion. This, it should be noted, applies to any similar form of amusement, the footlight drama, the opera, vaudeville, etc. In these latter institutions, however, the performance is broken by intermissions, thus giving the audience a chance to rest and refresh itself.

It became evident to producers, therefore, that some means must be devised for an even further speeding up of the storytelling technique of the dialogue film. The first method used by the more visionary producers and writers was in the shortening, the chopping down, of all possible scenes, and the utilization of new forms to cover *rapidly* certain story angles which must be revealed but which need not be presented at length.

This was accomplished by developing what might be termed the "lap-dissolve sequence," in which an entire phase of a story is covered by a series of lap dissolves or "wipes," as the new type of scene-blend is sometimes called. By this device, for instance, a youth's entire four years at college may be shown by means of ten to twenty brief glimpses of the youth in various classrooms, campus, and athletic-field activities, one following quickly upon the other for a few feet of film, getting over many vital facts of his college career, but doing it in short, fast footage.

Or again, if it is desired to cover quickly the career of an ambitious and struggling young opera singer who journeys to Europe to achieve her goal, she will be presented in a brief series of wipes, showing her: (1) on the ocean liner as it leaves the dock; (2) taking her first lessons from some old-world singing maestro; (3) nervously making her debut in a small role; (4) singing the title role in *Carmen;* (5) the ovation of the crowds; (6) laudatory reviews in the press; (7) finally, her triumphant return on another boat with many reporters waiting to interview her.

This device made its first appearance in the silent drama, but it was used sparingly and by only a few of the more advanced writers and directors. It remained for the talking picture to utilize the idea to a wider extent. As time passes, this form of fast story coverage will gain even further popularity.

Analysis reveals that the next step in the speeding up of the dialogue film was effected by a rather revolutionary change in scenario structure—the introduction of numerous short sequences in place of a few lengthy ones. Almost from the very first days of the photoplay, it had been laid down as a fundamental rule in good scenario presentation that the story be arranged in a small group of sequences, the fewer the better. Writers were called upon to tax their ingenuity in an effort to arrange and compress the actions and backgrounds of the plot into the minimum number of settings and sequences possible. A scenarist's talent was in some respects estimated by his ability to achieve this result. Many scripts contained only three or four sequences. It was the contention of most producers that "the fewer the sequences the smoother and clearer the story."

In an effort to enliven the talking picture, which was becoming tedious and losing its popularity, this former rule of the writing craft is being discarded by many producers.

Leaders in this movement have been such producers as the alert and progressive Darryl Zanuck and Carl Laemmle, Jr., who have given a new pace and tempo to many of their films by presenting them in a series of fast incidents. As a result, not only do most producers today have a tendency to disregard the number of sequences in a photoplay, but some of them actually favor a script composed of a number of short, snappy sequences rather than one of more simplified construction. Adherents of this school of scenario technique contend that the brief, speedy sequence gives the film more movement, more sweep, and the illusion of more action. As a writing policy it is gaining much favor in the studios. Further comment and examples are offered in a later chapter.

Of late there can be detected in the writing of film sequences, whether long or short, a new form of technique borrowed from the stage, which in many respects lends itself admirably to the cinema. It entails the building of each sequence with a gradual rise in dramatic interest, followed by a quick twist and fade-out at the end, as though it were an act in a stage play.

Formerly, photoplay sequences were handled in much the same manner that the novelist writes his chapters. As the novelist ended his chapter wherever he considered there was a break of action, regardless of the drama entailed, so the scenarist ended his sequence merely on the same basis. It mattered not whether the sequence ended in a "punch," or otherwise. Some faded out on a dramatic highlight, others simply ended on a piece of unimportant business.

Today many of the better scenarists are "ringing down," so to speak, each episode with a strong "curtain" or dramatic punch. Every sequence is treated with the theory that it is a new "act" or phase of the story. It is built on a slowly rising interest in tempo and drama, then brought to a climax of some kind, and a quick fade-out or "curtain," to be followed by other sequences in the same fashion. The attempt is made, of course, to have each photoplay curtain more dramatic and suspenseful until the final grand climax is reached at the end of the film.

Despite the fact that this technique is following closely along the lines of one phase of the footlight drama, it cannot be claimed as inherently the property of the stage. Some novelists have used it with good effect. Regardless of its source, however, it is a form that can be utilized to good advantage by scenarists in the preparation of many photoplays. Some writers assert that, as in the case of the legitimate drama, this act-and-curtain system is superior for all types of cinemas and will eventually be as universally used in films as in stage dramas. I cannot agree fully with this theory.

The recent perfection of "process shots" has also made it possible for the studios to use more and varied backgrounds and to present extra sequences at a saving of both time and money. By means of these process shots players may be shown on the streets of London, in Paris, at the Riviera, or at almost any location without their ever having left the studio.

This is accomplished by having special representatives make camera shots of the desired location or background. Then another shot is made in the studio of the players going through the action of their scene. The two films, by means of trick camera projection or laboratory work, are blended together in such a manner that the players themselves actually appear to be in the locale. Other new methods are also being developed.

The famous dictum of the Greek playwrights in regard to the ideal technique for writing drama was to strive for unity of time, place, and action. We have already seen how during the reign of the talking picture the producers, by speeding up the cinema, breaking the scenario into more and shorter sequences, have unknowingly left the unity-of-time and unity-of-action rules by the wayside. Now, by virtue of process shots, the lap-dissolve sequence, and a faster pace generally, in addition to the introduction of the short-sequence system, it is possible to cover so much ground that an almost unlimited number of backgrounds may be presented in one production. Consequently producers are unconsciously also discarding the unity-of-place ruling.

On top of all these changes, the cinema producers of the present era are gradually also waiving the regulation in regard to limiting the number of *characters* in a story. Originally the studios demanded that only a few characters be used in the scenario. In making the adaptations of famous novels and plays the studios would often eliminate as many as one third of the original characters, and only those roles which played important parts throughout the entire story would be retained as a rule.

Today far more characters are being allowed in a script. There is almost no limit to the number that may be used, so long as they are utilized to the advantage of the script. Under the present short-sequence system, characters are being introduced importantly, to appear in only one or two sequences, then disappear completely from the remainder of the story. In some cases actors with box-office names are today paid large salaries to portray these brief roles.

This new trend regarding additional characters, however, so far applies mostly to the bigger or medium-sized productions. When making what are termed "program" pictures, the producer still adheres rather closely to the old policy of few characters; although, even here, he is now permitting more than formerly.

Also, it must be noted, that in allowing more characters to be used by writers today, the producers intend this to apply chiefly to secondary players, supporting characters, etc. The chief romantic and plot interest, of course, must, as formerly, revolve around three or four stars or leading players. Even in this latter respect there has been a certain letting down of the barriers, as witness *Dinner at Eight*, *Grand Hotel*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, etc.

With all this acceleration, this faster cutting, the introduction of more sequences and characters—although accomplished gradually and without the notice of the average theatregoer—it can be recognized that if one were to look at the average silent picture today it would seem slow and draggy indeed. This is not due to any inherent fault in the silent picture itself, nor is it any proof that speed in the cinema is in itself a virtue. Rather, the necessity for speed was forced upon the cinema because of certain shortcomings of the talking picture. The appraisal of all values, including speed, is comparative.

The pace of the silent drama was quite sufficient and satisfactory for the form of cinema technique then in vogue. Today silent films are slow only because of the steep acceleration which has been given the dialogue picture. Whether this increasing speed will eventually prove a blessing or a detraction depends upon whether or not it is used in an intelligent and well-balanced manner.

For the present, however, the matter of swift pace is perhaps the outstanding phenomenon of the new talking-picture technique. Certainly it is a far-reaching development which calls for the closest study and application of the screen writer of the future.

CHAPTER II

Writing Problems, Old and New

THE cinema writer of today is faced with several problems which did not exist in earlier forms of the photoplay. On the other hand many limitations and confinements which formerly held a strong restrictive power over the writer have now either been eliminated or are rapidly crumbling away.

This latter development is a mark of progress upon which I wish to lay special emphasis—the gradual disappearance of a number of the old confinements. It is a condition that calls for the attention and study of every cinema writer, whether he is a newcomer to the field or a professional studio writer.

It means that many of the old rules and regulations concerning the photoplay are no longer valid; it means that certain handicaps and obstructions which once confronted the scenarist have vanished; it means that much of what the cinema writer formerly had to know is now obsolete and is not worth learning.

This is highly important. It is pointless for the prospective screen writer to spend time and energy in the acquiring of facts which will only clutter up his mind and be of no practical use to him.

Particular heed, therefore, should be given to the following changes of status in restrictions which were once part and parcel of every scenarist's training. Some of these were touched upon lightly in Chapter I, but are now dealt with more specifically:

1. The plot and dramatic action of the story do *not* have to be compact and concise in regard to the time element of their unfoldment. In other words, the unraveling of the story can be over a five-, ten-, twenty-, or fifty-year period in its telling, if the story may be most logically and impressively presented in that length of time. Heretofore, with only a few exceptions, the producers demanded stories which took place in a comparatively short space of time. Such stories will naturally continue to be popular, but not to the exclusion of others in which the plot covers a span of years.

2. The writer need no longer be hampered in regard to the number of settings, backgrounds, or locales he wishes to use in presenting his story in a graphic, effective, and appealing manner. Until recently, the writer in creating a story for the screen was compelled to juggle his plot and cramp his ideas, in an effort to confine the plot action to a few settings and locales, because it was constantly pounded into him that his manuscript, to be in keeping with studio demands, must be limited in settings and locales. The inauguration of the *lap-dissolve sequence*, *process shots*, and other modern studio technique, has allowed faster story coverage and also cut production costs in the shooting of background scenes, thus eliminating this objection. Many producers now *prefer* a generous number of settings and backgrounds.

3. Stories may now be episodic in treatment. It is no longer strictly required that they be of the rising-scale type of dramatic construction, which starts with one plot thread and builds steadily without a letup to the climax. There must, of course, still be a sustaining dramatic interest in the theme or development of the story, and in its characters, but the treatment may be episodic if it is effectively told in this manner. Such films as *G Men*, *Viva Villa*, *The Mighty Barnum*, *It Happened One Night*, *Diamond Jim*, *The Story of Louis Pasteur*, etc., fall into this classification. It should be pointed out, however, that this is perhaps the most diffi-

cult form in which to write an impressive photoplay. Some producers are still averse to it. It is a trend nevertheless that will make marked progress in the next few years.

4. The writer need not withhold any elements, situations, or developments from his story because of apprehension concerning production costs. For many years cinema writers were cautioned to hold their imagination under control, shape their situations and plots in a manner that would not call for too heavy an outlay from the producer, as it was contended that only in a few "super-pictures" did the studio indulge in spectacular display. Today, however, there exist a number of new inventions and clever artifices which permit the producer to achieve spectacular effects for a reasonable outlay, even in his program pictures. He is seeking the spectacular, not avoiding it. So, another archaic cinema restriction may now be ignored.

5. Not only is it no longer necessary for the writer to cramp and twist his story in an endeavor to hold down the number of characters in it—for the studios now permit any number of characters—but far more latitude is allowed in a truthful and realistic presentation of both sides of a hero or heroine's character. The faults as well as the virtues may be shown today, so long as the presentation is kept within the bounds of decency. The earlier demand for absolutely perfect heroes and heroines acted as quite a handicap or obstruction in the writing and submitting of many stories.

6. In conceiving or creating a story, the writer need have no hesitation about including any unusual, imaginative, fantastic, or heretofore unfilmed effect, incident, or situation merely because he feels the producer might have difficulty in achieving this effect because of camera or studio limitations. For example: a writer in working out a story often thinks of some fanciful touch or incident that would make an unusual screen effect, perhaps psychological, spiritual, or mysterious; yet he omits it because he feels either that it is too bizarre or that the studio might have no way of filming such an effect. Previously, this was a definite obstacle to the

writer, for, despite the wizardry of the studios, there were many effects that they either could not, or would not, present on the screen. In recent months, however, so many new laboratory and camera tricks have been perfected that producers today can achieve practically any effect that the author can conceive. Furthermore, they are seeking such material. The author should therefore give no thought to such questions as "Can they do it?" or "How do they do it?" but simply write it into his story. Even the professional studio writer is today not expected to know how effects are accomplished, his task is merely to conceive them. Materialization and production of the effects is now the job of experts who compose what is known as the "Special Effects Department," which has no connection with the scenario staff.

With the elimination of these former restrictions it can be seen that the writer today has far greater latitude in regard both to the use of his creative powers and to the kind and varieties of stories for which he may find a cinema market.

The breaking of such barriers serves as a distinct advantage to the continuity writer as well as to the author of original screen stories:

a. The writer of original stories now has a wider range of subjects, plots, characters, ideas, locales, and situations to select from and utilize, and more liberty in the handling of these elements.

b. The continuity writer is freed from many of the limitations and conditions which once encumbered him. Previously, in the case of certain novels and stage plays which had been purchased for adaptation to the cinema—and which transgressed some or all of these former restrictions—he was forced to twist and reshape the plot drastically, eliminate or alter several of the characters and settings, and struggle to retain, nevertheless, the full flavor of the original work. Under these earlier conditions such a task was often manifestly impossible. Thus, the screen was constantly flooded with maltreated adaptations of noted works.

Today, however, as a result of the smashing of these old retaining walls and traditions, cinema writers of every type may forget such restrictions, give free rein to their imagination, and turn more of their attention to creative writing.

In passing, it should be noted that some of these changes and new conditions are not due primarily to the introduction of sound to the cinema; many of them are evidences of progress and development in the photoplay that would have come sooner or later even if the silent picture still reigned.

The cinema writer still has his problems, of course. Some of these are new, and some are old problems that must be handled in a different way. Both the introduction of dialogue and the general advancement of cinema technique have brought new conditions and opportunities for the writer to study and utilize.

These problems can be placed under the following broadly defined divisions:

Deciding the structure for the story.
Treating the story for sound and for action.
Making use of the camera.
Proper use of dialogue.
Possibilities of tempo and rhythm.
Avoiding common faults.

Because of their importance in present-day screen writing, each of these topics, including the many minor problems and subdivisions which relate to them, is being dealt with in detail in the chapters which follow.

CHAPTER III

Story Construction

STORY presentation on the screen, as far as structure is concerned, may be divided, generally speaking, into three different forms of composition:

1. The dramatic form.
2. The literary form.
3. The composite form.

1. *The Dramatic Form.* In pattern and principles of construction this form follows rather closely along the lines of the usual stage play. It is a style, in fact, that has been borrowed directly from the footlight drama. It was adopted when dialogue was first brought to the films and has been retained ever since, with only a few minor alterations and enhancements introduced in recent years.

Under this form the story is, and must be, written in a small compact group of situations, laid in a few backgrounds and usually only one or two locales. The action, being confined to a minimum of backgrounds, is condensed into a limited series of sequences (comparative to acts on the stage), each of which runs straight through for a considerable period without a break. Because of these confinements, and the lack of opportunity for the usual cinematic switching from background to background and locale to locale, screen stories of this type must almost of necessity be loaded with a great deal of dialogue to fill them up and round them out to feature-picture length. Thus, this form of screen story is apt to seem very talky, unless the dialogue deals with very dramatic situations. Even then it often becomes monotonous when the camera angles are stereotyped or the direction inexpert. Giving the film the much desired quality of *movement* is quite difficult with this form, because the writer must rely more or less merely on camera angles to achieve it, and here he is limited even in this respect. Moving shots, pan shots, truck shots, reverse shots, etc., are a great asset here, however, and the writer should make intelligent use of them to produce as much illusion of movement as possible and offset the story's confinement to a few settings.

I wish to point out, however, that merely because a story has been presented in play form on the stage does not mean that it must be written in the same form of construction when adapted to the cinema. The studios sometimes follow this policy, but in many cases erroneously.

Often a stage play, which for footlight purposes has been compressed into three or four acts or settings, permits of far more graphic, pictorial, and comprehensive presentation when being transferred to the cinema. This applies particularly in the case of stage dramas in which, first, the early life and affairs of the characters *before* the play opens are of importance and bear some relation to what follows later; secondly, when certain dramatic or colorful events happen off stage and are described in speech by various characters during any of the acts.

In both of these instances, the off-stage affairs and events which are told through dialogue in the play, can, and usually should, be told by pictorial action.

The story action of some stage plays, it must be admitted, is so compact and logically confined to a few settings, that only minor changes or embellishments can be made in bringing them to the screen. Such a play as Elmer Rice's *Street Scene* might be cited. Here the entire action of the play occurs in a typical New York side street. The two or three incidents which happen off stage are only of minor importance to the drama which the playwright wishes to present. Also, the very theme and novelty of idea which the playwright is striving to create is the showing of a dramatic cross section of life which occurs entirely on the street of a metropolitan city. The very title of the play, *Street Scene,* suggests its purpose. Therefore, it would be defeating the very novelty and end of the opus to depart from this construction. Very little could be gained, and much would be lost.

There are many other plays, and also original screen stories, that are of somewhat the same nature as *Street Scene; i.e.,* stories which by their very subject matter compel compressed action and a minimum of backgrounds or locales. To cite a few: *Grand Hotel,* the complete story of which occurs in a hotel; *Four Hours to Kill,* all of which happens in a theatre; *Dinner at Eight,* laid entirely against the background of a fashionable house party; *Union Depot,* with action transpiring exclusively in and about a metropolitan railway station.

It is not to be inferred, however, that only plays confined to one or two settings may be written in the dramatic form of screen structure. There are some stories which unfold against four, five, or even more, main settings and yet, because of the fact that the action in each setting calls for prolonged unbroken scenes and situations, the dramatic form of construction may be successfully utilized for the film as a whole, interspersed only occasionally with minor scenes in some other location.

2. *The Literary Form.* Here the writer follows more the pattern and storytelling principles of the novel or short story. There is no attempt to compress the plot or main action into a certain limited group of situations composed principally of long, unbroken scenes between the leading characters. Rather, the aim is to treat the subject and characters in greater detail and with more thoroughness. Or, perhaps, because of the nature of the subject and plot, it is a story which of necessity must be handled with wider spread, requiring many situations, backgrounds, or locales.

With this form the writer essays to develop his characters and unfold his story in a more intimate, colorful, and descriptive manner, by means of touches, incidents, idiosyncrasies of the characters, and numerous minor situations and events *in addition* to the main situations that are expected to supply the dramatic punch of the film. The writer under this form gives little or no thought to the number of sequences, backgrounds, or locales entailed in presenting his story, so long as every scene, situation, or incident written aids in presenting the opus more effectively, without dull spots or dragginess. Also, while he does try to build his plot toward some sort of grand climax at the end of the story, there is no special effort made to compress the earlier action and events into certain powerful situations. Instead, he is often apt to lean more on the human, intimate, or sympathetic aspects of his plot and characters. He is striving for a cumulative effect, presenting interesting and graphic facts, elements, and incidents as he goes, but building slowly yet surely toward the main point or climax of his story.

The literary form of construction offers wide latitude, and may be used for highly dramatic or tragic subjects as well as those of the human-interest variety. As a case in point, *Mutiny on the Bounty* may be cited. Here, in the screen version, throughout the early portions of the film the writers presented many touches and bits to establish the traits of the various characters; then followed a series of incidents and secondary situations revealing the cruelty of the captain, the sufferings of the men, the hardship and perils of the sea in general, and the gradual undercurrent of revolt among the crew. There was at all times a sense of seething drama underlying the action, but at no time was there anything that might be termed a major situation until well along in the film, when Clark Gable, as Fletcher Christian, breaks into open revolt and leads a mutiny. The scene in which Captain Frye forces Christian to sign the ship's papers almost reached this classification, but just fell short of it. Yet, because of vividly drawn characterizations and well-chosen incidents there was a consistently pervading feeling of drama throughout the picture.

In *It Happened One Night,* we have an excellent example of the human, heart-interest story handled in literary form. Here we find merely a chain of amusing, touching, and romantic incidents, tied together by a light story thread dealing with various events that happen to a wealthy girl and a reporter thrown together on an overnight bus ride. The writers in adapting this short story to the screen used a great number of sequences not only on the bus, but before and after the bus scenes. No attempt at all was made to confine the action to a few locales or situations. The sequences keep fading in and fading out, hopping from one background to another. Nor was there at any time an endeavor to build for what might be termed a highly dramatic situation. In fact, this story even has what may be classed a very light climax. Nevertheless, because of compelling characters, colorful incidents, and effective intimate touches, *It Happened One Night* was one of the most popular and financially successful films made in recent years.

The literary form offers greater utility, wider possibilities, and more advantages than the dramatic form. It supplies more avenues of use for the writer. It is a style of construction that can be adopted in the telling of a very large percentage of stories intended for the cinema. It may be used for the intimate document, the saga, or the work of epic qualities. Observe the following wide variety of cinema subjects, both originals and adaptations, in which the literary form was used—*King Henry VIII, Back Street, The Crusades, The Mighty Barnum, Lives of a Bengal Lancer, Diamond Jim, G Men, Skippy, I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang, Smilin' Through, Les Miserables, The Champ, The Dark Angel, Bad Girl, The Country Doctor, Tarzan,* etc.

When not skillfully utilized, the chief fault to be found with the literary form is that it has a tendency to be slow moving, wandering, lacking in force, point, or vitality. In stringing together a series of incidents and sequences which are of themselves interesting, but noncumulative in dramatic effect of story building, there is danger of the screen story's becoming drawn out, unwieldy, draggy, or ponderous. Either it does not reach a crisis and climax quickly enough, or it does not build to these essentials at all. It becomes, in fact, a case of too much incident and not enough drama. This is a fatal shortcoming in the cinema. In adopting the literary form, the writer must be sure that the characters are colorfully and powerfully drawn, that each incident has a direct and necessary bearing upon the story as a whole, and that each succeeding sequence contributes in building toward a definite climax.

3. *The Composite Form.* This style represents a blending of the dramatic and literary forms of story construction. It is a cross-pattern, a mixture, of the storytelling methods and devices of both the fiction writer and the playwright, combined with technique and creative elements inherent in the motion-picture art itself. As such, the composite form is original and unique, and peculiar to the cinema. Under this type of construction certain phases of the story may be told in narrative or descriptive manner by means of character touches, human and vital incidents, shown in numerous quick sequences; while other story phases are presented in dramatic fashion by use of more lengthy situations played for a protracted period before one background or setting. Generally speaking, this is the most effective form of all, and the one most ideally suited for the talking picture. It offers the possibility of eliminating both the faults of the dramatic form (stiltedness, lack of movement, and too much talk) and the defects of the literary form (scattered interest, superfluous incident, lack of suspense and drama).

The composite form may be utilized for either the original screen story or the adaptation of play, novel, or short story. It is extremely flexible, allowing a diversity of usages.

In adapting a stage play, for instance, the writer may take a certain portion of the dialogue and translate it into literal or pictorial scenes. He may even create additional character touches and incidents which the playwright has suggested but not shown.

On the other hand, in adapting a literary work, the writer can not only eliminate some of the incidents, descriptive and narrative material, but he may concentrate and build up other moments in the story so that they can be played for sustained drama in situations of a more prolonged nature than perhaps existed in the original work.

It can readily be seen that with the composite form of story structure the writer is not only able to utilize the worth-while values of sound and dialogue to produced *dramatic* situations, but he may also intermingle scenes and incidents of pictorial charm, action, or plot, thus broadening the interest and creating the highly desirable element of *movement*. There is thus established a definite appeal to both the *eye* and the *ear*, something much to be desired in devising successful cinema material.

An excellent example of a stage play adapted to the screen by means of what I term the composite cinema form was *Smilin' Through*.* Here we have a play dealing with both the past and the present and their effects upon the lives of the principal characters. The plot concerns two love stories, an old romance which occurred many years before the opening of the play, and another romance which develops after the play opens.

The plot, briefly sketched, is as follows. Kathleen Dungannon is in love with Kenneth Wayne, but her aging and stubborn uncle, John Cartaret, having sworn that no one of his line shall ever wed a Wayne, forbids their marriage. Pressed for an explanation he relates a tale of events that happened fifty years before. In this earlier period, Cartaret and a rival, Jeremiah Wayne, were both in love with Moonyeen Clare. She chose Cartaret, and Wayne, becoming madly jealous

*Film credits, as to producers, authors, directors, etc., on all photoplays prominently cited throughout this book, will be found listed at the back of the volume.

and drunk, forced his way into the house the night of the wedding, shot at Cartaret, and accidentally killed Moonyeen as she jumped in front of her sweetheart. Remembering this, Cartaret continues firm in his opposition to the modern romance until the spirit of Moonyeen Clare gets a message across from the other world and softens his stubborn heart.

In the stage play the entire story is told in one setting and in three acts. The first act deals with the modern romance and Cartaret's opposition. The second act switches back to the events of the earlier period. The third act returns to the modern romance and ends the play.

In creating the cinema version, the screen writers made many alterations in this limited arrangement of settings and scenes, as well as introduced many new incidents which greatly enhanced the story for film purposes.

To begin with, at the opening of the film the modern romance has not yet started. Later, the young lovers first meet by accident, without knowing each other's identity, in the musty old Wayne mansion, which has been deserted for many years. They strike an immediate response in each other. These scenes, played for lightness and mystery, add a new note to the story, and are among the best scenes in the film. The romance is then made more intimate and appealing by the injection of brief sequences showing the two riding together over the countryside, stopping to chat, eat, and become better acquainted. A warm camaraderie is here established.

When old Cartaret forbids Kathleen to see young Wayne further and she agrees, this angle is built up by having the perplexed, bewildered lover call to see her repeatedly. The girl avoids him until at last she cannot stand it any longer, and in a dramatic scene she tells him the truth. Another additional sequence is interpolated when, upon Wayne's announcing that he is leaving for the war front, the girl suggests, and finally pleads, that if they cannot marry they should at least "belong to each other" before he goes, perhaps never to return.

Further, upon Wayne's return from the war, now a hopeless cripple and feeling that he cannot burden himself upon Kathleen, a most effective situation is written wherein he first tries to hide from the girl in the old Wayne mansion; then, upon her discovery that he has returned, he endeavors to shield his infirmities and pretend to Kathleen that he no longer cares for her. She leaves, crushed and dazed, but later learns of his attempt at self-sacrifice and hurries to him.

These and other similar inserted incidents reveal the improvement that was accomplished with *Smilin' Through* by blending the literary cinema form with the dramatic form of the original stage play. In the handling of the spirit-vision scenes and fade-backs in the unique style peculiar to the motion picture, a third style was thereby used in the composition.

As an example of a *literary* work adapted to the screen by means of the composite cinema form, we shall cite *Alice Adams*. Tarkington's story is laid in a small town. It tells of Alice Adams, a proud, high-spirited girl of imagination and ideals, who is handicapped by the comparative poverty of her family. She is unable to buy the clothes or participate in the social activities which the other girls of the town enjoy. She is snubbed by the local social set, who misunderstand her. A well-to-do youth comes to town. The daughter of the town's rich man sets her cap for him. Alice also meets and falls in love with him. The fads and foibles of the town, and Alice's little trials and tribulations are stretched out to full book length until the ending of the story, which brings Alice and the youth together. In the novel the dramatic and emotional moments are scattered broadly throughout the story in regular fiction fashion, most of them being related by means of description or narrative.

In the screen version, the scenarists have weeded out those parts of the story least valuable to the cinema, or those which might slow it up. In other words, any incidents or secondary situations which did not seem to lend themselves to effective presentation on the screen were eliminated. Next, they selected the most important situations in the story and made every effort to amplify them, build them up, treat them with even more emphasis and length than was necessary in the book. These scenes they wrote in *dramatic* cinema form to point up the story, give it punch, and also to balance the literary parts of the picture.

Three important situations, for instance, that were chosen to present in dramatic form were:

1. Where Alice, after many difficulties in getting dressed, goes to the rich girl's party, and, having no young man to take her, is grudgingly taken by her young brother. The entire sequence at this affair is most effective dramatically. No one pays any attention to Alice when she arrives. She is forced to go through dance after dance with her brother until he finally refuses to continue any longer. She then tries to carry on a "high-toned" conversation with him but he walks away. None of the other youths asks her to dance. She stands awkwardly alone on the dance-room floor, the only girl without a beau. In an effort to hide her embarrassment, she strikes up a conversation with some old ladies playing cards, telling them that she must rest because she is "all tired out from dancing." And so the situation continues, one thing piling up on top of another, with the brother finally humiliating her by getting mixed up in a crap game with the negro servants, and Alice leaves the party and returns home. This is a continuous stretch of film drama that will perhaps never be forgotten by anyone who has seen it.

2. The situation in the Adams' dining room, where the well-to-do young man has been invited to dinner. By means of the literary form we have previously been shown that Alice has had misgivings about inviting him to dinner; she has felt either that it would not be impressive or that things might not go well. Then we have seen Alice, along with all the rest of the family, feverishly and excitedly trying to make the humble home look attractive, and preparing a

"swanky" dinner. The meal begins and everything goes wrong from the very start. Nothing seems to be right. It is just one catastrophe after another. And Alice had so keenly wanted it to be a success. The night is stiflingly warm and unfortunately the food is even hotter. The father has never seen "fancy" dishes like this before and quickly reveals his ignorance, as well as many other things. Even the colored girl who has been hired for the evening to lend a superior touch to the home is unwittingly revealed as being there just for the special occasion. And all through this pathetically humorous scene Alice bravely keeps up a running fire of extempore conversation in the hope of covering up these blunders, pretending that everything is going along smoothly. And once again the brother adds the crushing blow when he excitedly arrives home with word that he is in trouble because of having shorted his employer's accounts. For sustained drama without the use of melodramatics or physical action, this is one of the finest pieces of screen writing that the talking picture has had to date.

3. The situation between Alice and the young man on the Adams' porch, after the dismal failure of the dinner. It has been a crushing blow to Alice, who had so much wanted to impress the only young man who has shown an interest in her; her air castles have crumbled into dust. Here the writers play for a strong dramatic scene by means of lengthy dialogue. Alice pours out her soul. She is given extremely long speeches, counterbalanced by short speeches from the boy. She tells him that she had felt all along that everything would be botched, that she knew her hopes were too good to come true, that he must be laughing at her silly little attempt at entertaining, that she knows now she will never see him again, etc. This is a dramatic dialogue situation, pure and simple, and appropriately so. There is very little action or movement whatsoever; it is shown simply by medium shots and close-ups of the two talking on the porch. The handling is most intelligent. It is a point in the story that calls for audible emotion and mental punch. Dialogue

here is most effective and logical. As a result, this situation carries a force, pathos, and conviction that would be difficult to surpass. I can think of no cinema scene in recent years that excels it in its ability to sway the sympathies and emotions of the audience.

These and other situations in *Alice Adams* reveal how the dramatic form may be combined with the literary form to produce the composite cinema form of construction. And it must be borne in mind that much of the efficacy of the above dramatically handled scenes was greatly aided and definitely prepared for by the earlier scenes handled in literary movement and style, *and without which the dramatic scenes would not have been nearly so effective.*

Having in mind the general theme and outline of his story, one of the first problems that the writer must decide, therefore, is the question of which of these cinema forms—the *dramatic*, the *literary*, or the *composite*—he is going to use in the telling of his story.

He must size up his subject from every angle: its plot, its characters, its principal situations, and the various locales in which the story might, or must, be presented. By *locales* is meant the main locations, such as a small town, a big city, Paris, the South Seas, etc. No thought need be given at this time to the exact *settings* of each scene or sequence; *i.e.*, whether it is to be laid in a drawing room, the veranda, an office, a café, or what. These details come up later, and are covered under "Treatment."

Which of the three forms seems to lend itself best to the particular story the writer has in mind? Which form offers, from a cinema viewpoint, the most advantages? In which can it be told most impressively, most effectively, and in the most logical manner?

Having thoroughly analyzed his story, settled these questions, and reached a conclusion as to the best suitable *form* for his particular subject, the next question to be decided is in regard to the line of action or continuity that the story will take.

Will it be told in progressive, *straightforward* action, or by means of a blend of straight action and *switch-backs* or *retrospects?* (1) Straightforward action is the starting of the story at one point and going forward with it progressively without ever turning back to any event that happened previously. (2) In the retrospective line of action certain parts of the story are dealt with by means of fade-backs to earlier events or periods. *Smilin' Through*, for instance, used this method.

Regardless of the *form* previously chosen by the writer for his story this decision concerning the line of action must be made, because each of the three forms—dramatic, literary, or composite—lends itself to either the straightforward or the retrospective type of handling.

In other words, irrespective of what *form* is used, the writer may elect to present his story entirely by direct action or by resort to portions of retrospective action.

The switch-backs, or retrospects, may be for brief periods or longer. In *The Trial of Mary Dugan*, for instance, there were several occasions during the trial when the action, for short stretches, faded back to relate earlier events.

In *The Man Who Reclaimed His Head*, on the other hand, the film opened with direct action for a few scenes, wherein Verin, the hero, calls at the home of DeMarney, a noted lawyer, to confess a murder to him. As Verin begins to tell his story the scene fades out, the action goes into retrospect and almost the entire film is consumed by Verin's tale. In the last reel it switches back again to the present, with scenes showing the lawyer stating that he believes the murder was justified and that he will handle the case.

In *The Power and the Glory*, radical and original cinema handling was resorted to. Dealing with the life of a man who rose from a railway trackwalker to president of the company, many and assorted retrospects were utilized, some of them startling in their screen effect. The story opened in the present, with direct action. Then, in one retrospect the hero would be shown at the age of eighteen, next at the age of twelve, then at the age of twenty-five. In one retrospect he is shown dying, yet in still later retrospects he is revealed in a period when he is alive. The producers of *The Power and the Glory* were attemping something new to the photoplay. They were endeavoring to use the novelist's license of hopping back and forth at will in describing and depicting the life of the hero. It was a commendably artistic effort, but the film proved to be rather confusing to cinema audiences. Retrospects should be compact and not too numerous.

When reaching a decision as to the line of action to be used for the structure of any cinema story, consideration should be given to the *type* of the subject, the category, and the classification under which the story falls.

In nine out of ten films presented today, the straightforward, progressive line of action is used. Professional studio writers use it in the great majority of cases. As a general rule it may be said to be the most effective.

Highly dramatic or melodramatic stories, or stories which aim largely at featuring physical punch are almost without exception best handled by the direct-action method. Retrospects have a tendency to slow them up, throw them off balance or out of tempo.

Romantic love stories, human- or heart-interest dramas, mysteries, psychological tales, character plays, or works of an epic nature may be handled in part by retrospective action with good results, if this method is intelligently used and blended.

Then there is what might be called the unusual, or novelty, story. Into this classification falls the fantastic, whimsical, weird, bizarre, or imaginative fiction. This sort of tale also lends itself to dreams, vision, and retrospect as well as straightforward action; for example, *The Return of Peter Grimm, She, Night Life of the Gods, The Scoundrel, Secrets, Things to Come, Outward Bound, Peter Ibbetson, Just Imagine.*

It is interesting to note that in some of these films, such as *Just Imagine* and *Things to Come*, the divertive action instead of switching back into the past goes forward into the future, or into some other realm.

CHAPTER IV

Treatment

TREATMENT may be described as the technique, means, and methods chosen, or created, to present the various incidents, situations, and characters in a story most effectively. The problem of treatment begins after the questions concerning the general story structure, as covered in the preceding chapter, have been settled.

The proposition of treatment can be separated into two parts:

1. Treatment as it relates to the pace and movement of the story as a whole.
2. Treatment as it concerns the special handling of individual scenes, sound effects, incidents, or situations.

The chief problem involved under Part 1 is: At what pace, or speed, are we going to endeavor to tell the story—rapid, moderate, or leisurely? For herein lies the solution as to the kind of treatment which should be used for the story *as a whole.* Once again our subject must be studied, its values, theme, and points of appeal fully appraised.

Melodramas, stories of adventure, thrills, or action, gangster and Western yarns are as a rule best presented in fast-pace treatment.

Mystery and detective tales, or weird yarns, lend themselves to either fast or moderate pace, depending upon the mood and feeling the author wishes to create.

Domestic dramas, sex dramas, modern love stories, and character portrayals are most effective in moderate pace.

The old-fashioned type of romance, the small-town story, and the psychological tale are usually better when related in a more leisurely technique. And so on down the line of fiction.

The matter of first setting the proper pace for the story is an important angle overlooked by a great many writers, and therein is the answer to a large number of ineffectual manuscripts and films. To write a melodrama in slow pace or a beautiful romance in rapid tempo is not only using faulty technique, but is courting almost certain failure. It is therefore urgent that the writer first fix the correct speed technique for his story clearly in mind before launching forth upon its writing.

If the leisurely pace is chosen, the writer may use fewer and longer scenes, fewer and longer sequences. Dialogue speeches can be also more lengthy, character touches more numerous, and each situation covered very thoroughly.

If the moderate pace is decided upon, then more and shorter sequences are desirable, and more and shorter scenes. Lap-dissolve sequences, or montage, may be occasionally resorted to for additional speed, to cover ground more rapidly. Dialogue should, in most cases, be briefer and snappier.

With the fast pace, the whole telling of the story is quickened. If the action is confined to a few settings or sequences, then speed must be gained by still shorter scenes, an almost constantly moving camera, and even briefer and more pointed dialogue. If the story calls for many settings, locales, and sequences, then in addition to the foregoing means, liberal use can be made of the lap-dissolve sequence or montage type of story coverage, examples of which are given in Chap. VII.

As observed in Chap. I, the pace of the cinema in general, regardless of the type of story, has been speeded up in recent years. The vogue for a swift style of plot coverage is gaining popularity in the studios.

To the impartial observer it appears that this method is undoubtedly admirably suited to certain types of stories, vital dramas, melodramas, adventure stories, certain historical and epic subjects. It is particularly commendable because it is a breaking away from the limitations and regulations of the foot-light drama, it indicates a developing of the photoplay along new, individual, and creative lines.

On the other hand it is a policy that should be used by writers and producers with intelligence and discretion. Certain types of stories, such as human dramas, romantic love tales, and intimate, heart-interest subjects can be more attractively and compellingly told by means of a slower technique.

There is also this peculiar psychological twist to speed—that the more one experiences it the more one demands it. If speed is made the predominant element of appeal in every photoplay, there is the danger that the public will keep demanding speed and more speed until the producers will be hard pressed to "top" each previous film in acceleration.

There is the additional peril that in overdoing the short-sequence photoplay, the film will eventually become excessively episodic. Already this fault is creeping into some films wherein the brief, fast-action sequence has not been used with good judgment. A confused, conglomerate, disconnected, and unsatisfying production often results.

Having analyzed the story and arrived at a decision as to the most appropriate pace, the next problem concerns effective treatment of the various individual points of the story. Here the creative talents of the writer are definitely called into play. The devising of incidents, touches, sound effects, bits of business, the choice of camera angles and effects, in fact the very *mode* of treatment for each sequence, places a test upon the writer's ingenuity and ability.

Take, for example, the matter of getting the story under way impressively. The opening scenes and shots are most important. The writer must catch audience interest quickly, present the locale, atmosphere—and often the mood and feeling of the story as well—all in a very few scenes.

This offers opportunity for a variety of styles, creative touches, and bits of deft technique, all of which are elements calculated to contribute freshness and originality, or to give added appeal to an opening sequence, or any other situation in the story.

In the case of *The Man Who Reclaimed His Head,** it will be recalled that the story concerns a man who, through desperation and injustice, is led to commit a murder. The writers of the screen play elected to tell almost the entire story in retrospect, by means of having the hero, Verin, confess his tale to DeMarnay, a lawyer.

Here is how they opened the story and brought Verin to the lawyer's home. (The following is quoted direct from the Universal shooting continuity.)

SEQUENCE A

After Credit Titles:

PARIS 1915

(Sound during these sequences embrace the distant booming of cannon, at uneven intervals, the sound of the Eiffel Tower sirens, and other signals of *alerte.*)

*Scene A-*1. *Exterior—Streets of Paris—Dolly Shot.*

It is NIGHT and a light snow is falling, covering the roofs of the city with a thin mantle. The siren sounds a warning. On the streets below the people rush madly into houses. Lampposts darken in one action. Several taxi drivers scramble frantically for shelter in cellars.

A few typical streetwalkers rush screaming into the Metro (subway). A few men in band uniform carrying their instruments follow to take shelter.

Two bicycle policemen toss their bicycles against a lamppost with a clock. One of the policemen sees a light emerging from a cellar window—he taps his bayonet against the iron bars. The light in the cellar goes out.

The city is now in pitch darkness. The cries of the horrified civilians, the sharp crack of the anti-aircraft guns, the bark of the French 75's, and the siren of the Tower come over the scene.

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*Producer and writer credits on scenarios quoted in this, and other, chapters are listed fully at the back of the volume.

Suddenly all becomes quiet—no sounds are heard as the CAMERA PANS to a little villa.

It stands surrounded by a garden in its lonely isolation. There is a light in the window on the second floor—all else is dark.

The windowpane breaks with a resounding crash. A woman's shrill scream of terror breaks the momentary silence. There is the noise of a door slamming. The sinister howling of a dog and the soft booming of the distant cannon come over the scene at intervals.

PAN DOWN to the street door, revealing PAUL VERIN and his daughter LINETTE.

He is a man of medium height but has a way of stooping himself forward which gives him the appearance of being shorter. He is dressed in a French corporal's uniform, covered by a big topcoat. The collar is turned up high around his face.

Linette, a child of four, has evidently been taken from her bed and dressed in a hurry by inexperienced hands. Her coat is partly buttoned; she is hatless, gloveless, visibly sleepy, and frightened. She tremblingly clings to her father, whining softly to herself.

PAN with Verin and the child as they cross the garden to the deserted street outside the garden. Verin and Linette are plodding, plodding along in the snow. The crunching of their feet is heard in a regular tread which is suddenly drowned by the sound of a military truck approaching.

The truck is conveying wounded soldiers.

DRIVER: Want a lift?

Verin absorbed in his thoughts does not answer. He continues to plod along, dragging Linette staring blindly ahead.

The driver of the truck reacts, exchanging an understanding glance with the soldiers sitting at his side, shrugs his soldiers.

Linette stumbles in the street. She starts to cry:

LINETTE (pitifully): Oh, Daddy, I'm so cold, I'm so cold, Daddy.

Verin reacts, comes out of his stupor, and looks at Linette.

VERIN: Cold? What? Cold?

LINETTE (crying): Yes, Daddy.

Verin: All right, don't cry . . . don't cry.

Verin puts down the valise and picks up Linette from the ground, covers her with his coat, picks up his valise, and proceeds. The air raid is still on.

Dissolve to:

A-2. Exterior of a Luxurious Villa.

Verin, carrying Linette, walks with an odd, stumbling gait, scanning the houses as he goes, obviously searching for a certain villa. He stops—reacts—as he sees the number he has been searching for.

He sets the child down, catches the knob of an old-fashioned bell, pulls it vigorously.

Note, in the foregoing specimen, how the screen writers in a few scenes have set the time, place, mood, and atmosphere of the story. Perceive the steady flow of movement, the camera shots and effects chosen to produce this result.

As the story opens and the camera moves along, taxi drivers, streetwalkers, and policemen are shown to get over the city atmosphere, to stand in contrast to the quietness of the suburban locale which quickly follows.

Night has been selected because it helps to create an effective, mysterious mood for the confession that is coming. The falling snow adds not only pictorial appeal, but it builds sympathy for the man and child who are plodding wearily through the cold and the storm toward some unrevealed destination.

That the man has something on his mind, that he is deeply worried, is deftly conveyed by the incident of the truck driver offering a lift and the man being so absorbed he does not respond. The sleepiness and fright of the child add further to the undercurrent of impending drama.

Observe how, by clever cinema technique, the background shifts from the busy city to the suburb, simply by means of panning the camera slowly to the side, taking in another view, as the sounds of the city die down. We know that these two locations are separated by some distance, and yet the transition has been made without the camera's changing from one scene to the other in the usual manner.

Also, note how sound effects, in addition to pictured action, are liberally brought into play, using the two elements in a perfect blend, *i.e.*, the rush and din of traffic, the cannonading, the policeman tapping his bayonet on the bar, the sirens, the cries and fear of the citizens caught by the air raid, then the comparative calmness of the suburb, broken only by the slamming of a window, the scream of a woman, the sinister howling of a dog, and the distant booming of cannon. Even the crunching of snow under the couple's feet as they plod along the road contributes a splendid audible touch.

Furthermore, this entire action of opening the story and bringing Verin to the lawyer's house has been done in only two scenes, and with a minimum of dialogue.

Thus, by well-conceived and carefully written treatment, a number of salient facts have been presented quickly in *The Man Who Reclaimed His Head,* and the story has been started under way in impressive fashion.

For another example, let us look at the opening of *Captain Hurricane,* as it is handled in the screen version, or shooting continuity.

CAPTAIN HURRICANE

FADE-IN

Scene 1. *Exterior Sea—Winter Afternoon—Long Shot.*

(Over all scenes in first episode superimpose fine icy snow falling)

A fishing fleet struggling desperately against high seas and sleety snow.

SOUND: Wind howling.

LAP DISSOLVE

2. *Exterior Sea—Winter.*

CLOSER SHOT FROM BELOW. The bottom of one of the boats being lifted on the crest of a wave and brutally dashed down again.

Lap dissolve out
Lap dissolve in

3. *Exterior Fisherman's Wharf—Winter.*

Sound: Ice grinds; waves dash roughly against the pilings.

Camera moves up to: long shot: Along one side of the one-storied fish warehouse about twenty people are huddled. Wrapped up against the weather, they are waiting, fearfully watching. Camera dollies along wharf catching distinctive Cape Cod types.

Camera stops at a group huddled in the shelter of the warehouse. Captain Ben Todd, very shy, always eating, any scrap will suffice. His speeches are not plunged into boldly—they begin with a noticeable hesitancy. A laconic, raw-boned fisherman and a garrulous, emphatic woman are talking:

Woman: When I seen him going by last week I called 'For the land's sake, Cap'n Brewster, are you plumb crazy sailin' out in this weather?' An' he yelled back he was goin' to catch *some* fish 'fore Christmas if he had to drown to get 'em!

Fisherman: Like as not he'll be good as his word.

Camera moves to close shot of Captain Ben. Disturbed, he fishes up a bit of dried herring from his pocket and starts chewing on it.

Captain Ben: Zenas Henry Brewster ain't beat yet—not by a camel's nose. (He looks up, calls): Ahoy there, Cap'n Jerry!

Camera pans up to: exterior dock warehouse. close shot. Perched on the ridgepole is Captain Jeremiah Taylor—cherubic, inquisitive. He never finds it difficult to talk. At the moment he is peering through a large spyglass.

Captain Ben's voice (continued): Sighted anything?

Captain Jeremiah: Nary a thing. An' the sea's wickeder than ever!

Here we have an impressive opening and considerable ground covered, taking us right into the meat of the story, in only three scenes. Observe, however, that in this case, in addition to action and sound effects, *dialogue* has been used to convey certain important facts.

The wharves and the character types set the locale and atmosphere of the story. The raging waves, the buffeting wind, the struggling fishing fleet, the boats being tossed about in the sea, give action and movement in addition to that gained by a mobile camera. The anxious, concentrated manners of the watchers, Captain Jeremiah peering out to sea through his spyglass, tell of their deep concern over something. The dialogue, direct and to the point, informs the cause of their alarm and who it is that they are concerned about. Sound effects have been accomplished through use of the howling of the wind, the lashing of the waves, and the grinding of ice against the pilings.

By virtue of well-conceived treatment we have learned, in convincing and effective manner, the background of the yarn, facts about some of the main characters and their peculiarities, and are aware that Zenus Henry Brewster may be out in the sea battling for his life, but that he is a determined, resourceful, and courageous man, and will probably weather the storm.

While the two examples just given are *openings* at the start of the story, it should be emphasized that the same kind of treatment is not only practical, but desirable, throughout other parts of the manuscript, especially at the beginning of important sequences or in connection with changes in locale during the action of the story.

For instance, in the screen play *Caravan* we find the following treatment of a sequence after the story is well under way. The purpose of this sequence is to show the Countess, heroine of the story, attending certain church ceremonies. Observe how this is quickly yet imposingly done, and how the Countess is taken out of the church without waste of time or footage.

FADE-IN

Scene 44. Interior Small Village Church.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP. A beautifully carved baroque angel hangs over the chancel. The voices of the choristers, accompanied by organ music, are heard. THE CAMERA SLOWLY TRAVELS DOWN, PASSING.

Scene 45. *Interior Village Church.*

MEDIUM SHOT OF CHOIR PROPER. With pious faces the boys sing devoutly. THE CAMERA TRAVELS ON.

Scene 46. *Interior Village Church.*

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP. A silver-haired organist is working almost tenderly the registers of a beautiful baroque organ. THE CAMERA TRAVELS ON.

Scene 47. *Interior Village Church.*

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP. A richly carved (grapes and other designs) pulpit. The village priest stands in silent prayer. CAMERA TRAVELS ON.

Scene 48. *Interior Village Church Nave.*

MEDIUM SHOT. The Countess sits in the family pew. Next to her, the Governess, touched to tears. The church is crowded with devout congregation in their holiday garbs. Rays of sunshine fall through the stained-glass window. The Governess points to the baptismal font.

GOVERNESS: That's where My Lady was baptised, twenty-one years ago . . . I was young then . . .

COUNTESS (with a friendly smile): You can be young again.

GOVERNESS: How?

COUNTESS: By violating the constitution!

Scene 49. *Interior Village Church Nave Hall.*

FULL SHOT. The mass is over. The Countess and Governess rise and slowly walk through the center aisle toward the door. THE CAMERA TRUCKS AHEAD. The peasants have risen from their benches and curtsy and bow as the Countess goes by and exits.

The moving camera, or truck shot, has been here used to excellent effect, taking in, on its journey from the fade-in, the beauty of the setting and furnishings, the mood of the occasion, the various types and personages, as well as the ceremony as a whole, finally and logically coming to a halt before the Countess, the principal character in the scene. Sound effects are nicely blended and emphasized through featuring of the choir, the organist, and the organ music.

Often, after a story is well under way (especially in the case of fast-action stories), the treatment has to be fairly brief or snappy and not go into too much detail, otherwise there is the danger of throwing the film out of tempo. For example, let us view the manner in which a sequence requiring a change of locale was handled in *Hold 'em Yale*. The situation is toward the end of the picture. A group of New York racketeers have gone to New Haven for the big Harvard-Yale football game. Their fortunes depend upon a young player by the name of Wilmot being in the game. Clarice, the heroine, unaware of their real identities, has gone to the game with them.

FADE-IN

Scene E-3. Panorama of Yale Bowl with a Game in Action.

WE PAN AROUND showing the jolly holiday crowd, the Yale-Harvard atmosphere, people still coming in. PASSING the players on the field, showing them making some plays. We hear some cheers from the stands, a band playing.

We pass by the score board.

CUT TO:

E-2. Close Shot of Scoreboard.

Showing the score. It is the second quarter. The score is Harvard 6 and Yale 0.

WE CONTINUE TO PAN AROUND to the Harvard side, where the Harvard cheerleaders are leading an organized cheer.

CUT TO:

E-3. Harvard Cheering Section.

They are giving Harvard a yell. Joe, Sam, Liverlips, Bennie, and Clarice are seated in the center of the Harvard section, completely surrounded by Harvard pennants. As the Harvard yell dies down, we

CUT TO:

E-4. Close Shot of Group.

In which it is noted that there is an empty seat next to Clarice. While the cheering is going on, Clarice looks at it and pulls Joe's arm, who is next to her.

CLARICE: I thought you said Captain Elliot was going to be here.

JOE: Never mind Captain Elliot. (He points across the field.) Which of them hoodlums is this Wilmot guy?

CLARICE: I can't see from this distance. Has anybody got glasses?

JOE: Glasses of what?

LIVERLIPS: I got a pint on my hip.

CLARICE (disgustedly): Field glasses!—See, everybody is using them. Gee—I wish I had a pair.

Joe and the boys look around. There is a moment's hesitation, and Liverlips' hand comes in with a pair of glasses, which he places in Clarice's hands. It can be obviously seen that the strap has been cut by Liverlips in getting someone else's property.

BENNIE (out of the side of his mouth as he sees the glasses): Nice work, Liverlips, old boy, old boy.

In this specimen from *Hold 'Em Yale* it will be observed that much of the spirit and atmosphere of the occasion is conveyed by the sound effects: the band playing, the students and their college yells, the noise of the crowd, umpires' whistles, etc. These are supported by only two or three brief pictorial shots. Then the action at once goes into dialogue and the unfoldment of the plot.

In the treatment of a screen story, the matter of sound effects, as well as dialogue, must at all times be borne in mind by the writer. In the handling of a scene he should be ever alert to the possibilities and enhancement values of sound. If concentrated upon, the setting, locale, or action itself will always suggest sound effects that might otherwise be overlooked.

To enumerate only a few: the steaming of kettles on the stove, church bells tolling, typewriters clicking, rain pelting on the roof, traffic noises, the drone of airplane motors, the pop of champagne bottles, birds singing in spring, roosters crowing in the country, ambulance sirens, machinery in operation, the shrill blasts of boats along the waterfront, the even tread of a prison lockstep, pens scratching on paper, the whinny of a friendly horse, the thud of a blow as it lands on a man's jaw, the creaking wheels of an old carriage or wagon, tom-toms beating in the jungle, the wailing or crying of animals in the night, a telegraph instrument's dotting of messages, etc.

Whatever the scene or the location, whether it be the city or country, a factory, store, café, carnival, or commercial enterprise, there are always certain atmospheric noises that can be called into play. They need not be obtrusive, unless for a definite purpose. They can be utilized as background noises. In many cases, it should be pointed out, they can come as *off-screen* noises. In other words, although they are *heard* their source need not be *shown.*

In *Smilin' Through,* for instance, there are samples of both kinds of treatment. In the Cartaret household we *see* the windows shake and also *hear* them vibrate, owing to distant war guns, which, however, are *not* seen. Again, when Kathleen is in the abandoned Wayne mansion, we suddenly hear a horse's hoofs coming up the roadway. We know somebody is arriving but we have no idea as to his identity. A moment later young Wayne enters the house without even having been shown outside. Yet the horse's hoofs, which we have heard but not seen, tell us clearly how he reached the house. This sort of treatment is not only excellent technique but it eliminates superfluous scenes and often adds to the drama or suspense.

There are also devices that can be resorted to for establishing a musical background in a logical manner, when this is desired. Often the writer may feel that music would be helpful in getting the audience in the right mood for a love scene. If it is an indoor scene one of the characters can turn on the radio and dial to an appropriate refrain, or the strains of music can come wafting in from an adjoining house or apartment. If the scene is outdoors, the music may come from strolling players or gypsies; if on an island, from natives; if in the wide-open spaces, from campers, hillbillies, cowboys. In an automobile or on a boat, the radio may be again resorted to. There is, in fact, no limit even to logical background music if only the writer will call upon his inventiveness.

The screen play of *Till We Meet Again* offers an example of superior treatment in the handling of a love scene, combining all the values of well-balanced dialogue, action, pictorial appeal, and logical background music. The locale is London. The scene is between Alan and Elsa, the hero and heroine of the story.

DISSOLVE TO:

Scene A-16. *Close Shot—Vine-covered Wall.*

Which gives us the impression for a moment that we are in an outdoor garden. But as the CAMERA PANS AROUND we see that this is a deliberate theatrical effect—an effort to catch the atmosphere of a Viennese garden in a London restaurant. Nothing pretentious about the place—it is a small affair, a few musicians, the orchestra is playing a number.

As the CAMERA PANS ON we get the suggestion rather than see the size of the place; and see also that the waiters, for a further touch of atmosphere, are dressed in rural Austrian costume.

The CAMERA TRUCKS UP TO A CLOSE SHOT of Alan and Elsa at an arbor table. The music effects Elsa wistfully. Alan notices her expression.

ALAN: Does it make you homesick?

ELSA: Sometimes . . . a little.

ALAN (with a mock frown): You see . . . I told you I didn't like the Viennese influence. Eight bars of a Strauss waltz and you're ready to swap the British lion for the Austrian eagle.

Scene A-17. Close Shot of Elsa.

She looks very strange for a moment—then breaks her mood and smiles and shakes her head.

ELSA: Not any more . . . (She listens to the music reminiscently, then sings a few bars of it—in German.)

Scene A-18. Close Shot of Alan.

As he picks up the song and sings the next few bars. (It should be a recognizable piece of Viennese music, which may be used later in the picture.)

Scene A-19. A Two-shot.

As Elsa looks at him fondly.

ELSA (in German): Where did you learn such good German?

ALAN (in German): At Heidelberg.

ELSA (in English): I used to sing that song when I was little —a long way from Heidelberg.

ALAN (leaning closer to her): It's silly—I don't even know the town you were born in . . .

ELSA (smiles): I'll show you. (She points down toward the table.)

Scene A-20. Close-up of Table—Elsa's Hand.

This table is unique—it is in the form of a map. As the CAMERA PANS DOWN on it we see boldly printed across the map table this legend:

ALL THE WORLD COMES TO VARDELL'S

and finally we see clearly AUSTRIA, and then the name of a small town on which ELSA'S HAND points:

ELSA'S VOICE: Here—

PULL BACK CAMERA TAKING IN CLOSE SHOT OF BOTH

ALAN (looking down at spot): And to think that small dot represents all the happiness in the world! Why, just think of it—you might never have been born!

ELSA (softly): Would you have been sorry?

ALAN: Of course—then *I* should never have lived.

ELSA: Where were *you* born?

ALAN (indicating on map): In here somewhere. It's a funny little place with a funny name—Chipping Witney . . .

Here it is. Far away from you.
(He puts his finger on a spot on the map.)
But the whole world couldn't keep us apart.
(His hand moves across Europe to hers.)
We were so surely meant for each other.
(His hand closes over hers. Their faces are close together. Unashamedly—oblivious of the crowded restaurant—their lips meet.)

Novelty, originality, and adroitness of treatment lift the above love scene out of the routine, hackneyed type. The surprise twist at the opening, wherein what appears to be a garden in Vienna turns out to be a setting in a London café, is a pleasing specimen of the newer technique. Truck and pan shots are employed to produce a feeling of movement. The decorations and the costumes of the waiters add color and atmosphere to the setting, while the playing of the orchestra allows chance for music to further the romantic mood. Dialogue is not excessive, but is nicely blended with the action, bits of business, and music. The incident of the table top's being a map is clever technique and is excellently used to provide interesting business for the lovers while they converse at the table. The entire handling is out of the ordinary, It reveals how a love scene that might have been just a stiff and stilted episode of two characters sitting at a table can be made appealing to both the eye and the ear by skillful treatment.

One of the important phases in the treatment of screen stories lies in the creation of these effective touches, twists, and incidents that supply sparkle, brightness, or cleverness to a situation or plot which may be fundamentally old. Not only do they add style and drama to the narration, but they are valuable contributory factors in the building of the characters.

For purposes of study and analysis, I am herewith giving several examples of twists and bits of business from different films, showing the devious ways in which they may be used to advantage:

1. The incident in *Mutiny on the Bounty* showing Captain Bligh giving orders to proceed with the flogging of the dead man. This immediately establishes the exceptional cruelty and mania for discipline of Captain Bligh. There may have been many other brutal captains, but few would have ordered this sadistic act.

2. In *Personal Maid's Secret*, the wife is endeavoring to persuade the husband to move to a swankier apartment. The husband refuses. The scene dissolves out with the husband emphatically declaring, "I definitely will not move to any apartment on East 74th Street." The next scene dissolves in on a sign reading "East 74th Street." The wife, as usual, has won.

3. The humorous incident in *Diamond Jim*, showing Brady in a café ordering enough from the menu for two or three persons. "How many will there be in the party?" the waiter asks as he takes the order. "I'm dining alone!" Brady replies. What quicker and more convincing way could have been used to convey Brady's enormous appetite?

4. At the start of *We're Only Human*, what appear to be undertakers' men are seen bringing a coffin out of a house. Just as they are about to load it in the wagon, a detective who has been watching them rushes across the street, knocks the lid off the coffin, and inside is revealed a live gangster who has been trying to escape a police blockade. A clever surprise twist.

5. In *Mary Burns, Fugitive*, Mary's cellmate arranges for their escape from prison. When they later take up residence in a hideout, however, it is revealed that secret-service men have established themselves in an adjoining flat with dictaphones. The apparent "escape," it now develops, had been engineered by the federal men, through Mary's cellmate, in order to trail Mary and catch the gang leader. Withholding this information from the audience until after the escape provided an extra story twist.

6. The incident in *Richelieu* wherein Richelieu's enemies think they have defeated him because they have prevented him from entering the King's chamber, but the wily Richelieu foils them by entering through a secret door at the psychological moment.

7. In *A Tale of Two Cities* the hero, Sydney Carton, is deliberating the idea of sacrificing himself on the guillotine to save

another man. In the medium shots of this scene, inconspicuous on the wall because of its distance from the camera, can be observed a framed quotation. But as Carton makes his decision, and the scene comes to a close-up, the sign on the wall in back of him is now seen to read "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Thus, in symbolism, is pointed up the thought of Carton giving his worthless and misspent life that another more worthy may live. An individual close-up of just the quotation might have been inserted and the symbolic touch would still have been a good one, but it was newer and better technique to have Carton in the scene, with the quotation visible over his shoulder. Avoid insulting an audience's observation powers by pounding points home too hard.

8. The twist in *Trouble in Paradise* wherein the hero and heroine have been making a great play for one another, each pretending to be a person of high social rank, when suddenly they both stand revealed as crooks in masquerade.

9. The graphic scene in *The Public Enemy* in which a gangster, instilled with the revenge code of the underworld, shoots a saddle horse because the animal has thrown another member of the gang and caused his death.

10. In *Cavalcade* two lovers on an ocean liner were shown in fond embrace. Then, as they step aside, a life preserver is revealed with the ill-fated name *Titanic* on it.

11. The scenes in *Hands Across the Table* where the hero, who is supposed to be vacationing in Bermuda, is given violet-ray lamp treatment by the manicurist in her New York apartment so that he may seem to have a sun tan when he later meets his fiancée.

12. In a Laurel and Hardy film the two comedians were shown looking in a shop window which advertised ingredients and supplies for making one's own liquors. "That's a fine idea," Hardy suggests. "Yeah, and what we can't drink, we'll sell," responds Laurel. The scene dissolves out as they make the decision, and dissolves right back to a scene showing them being escorted into a prison. The audience easily imagines the intervening events, and scenes of the comedians making the liquor, selling it, and being arrested are thereby eliminated.

13. In *The Informer* Gypo Nolan sees the poster containing a

picture of his friend, McPhillip, and the offer of £20 (twenty pounds) reward for information leading to the latter's arrest. Treacherous thoughts enter Gypo's brain but he tries to shake them off. He tears the poster down and tosses it to the pavement, trying to get the evil thoughts out of his head. But as he walks down the street a gust of wind blows the poster after him until finally it catches itself around his leg, tantalizing him with more urgings.

14. The character touch in *King Henry VIII* showing Henry gluttonously eating his food, tossing the bones over his shoulder, as he discusses important affairs of state.

15. The incident at the opening of *The Criminal Code.* Two calloused detectives are answering a call, as they argue heatedly about a card bet. They get their prisoner, send the dying man to the hospital, and return without halting in their argument.

CHAPTER V

Dialogue

THE subject of dialogue is being dealt with early in this volume because, as far as professional writing for the screen is concerned, a talent for dialogue is, perhaps unfortunately, the most valuable asset for the writer. Certainly, under writing demands as they exist today, it is his best means of entree and employment in most studios.

The reason harks back once again to the days in 1928 when the film producers were brought face to face with the fact that talking pictures were definitely to become a permanent fixture in the cinema; the studios must make a quick shift from the "dumb drama," to which their whole organizations had been geared for years, and change over to the making of "talkies."

Fearful that they were treading on dangerous ground, feeling unsure of themselves, lacking confidence in their own abilities and the skill of their writing staffs, film producers neither stopped nor risked the chance to analyze what the real values and appeal of the photoplay would be with speech added to it. They started a mad scramble for playwrights and exponents of the stage writing craft.

Soon playwrights of every description, good, bad, and indifferent, began to arrive in Hollywood from Broadway and all points of the compass. A little later, to play safe all around, fiction writers and novelists who seemed adept at writing dialogue were also corralled and brought to the film capital, although footlight scribes were given the preference.

It did not matter whether the offerings of these playwrights had lasted only a few nights on Broadway or that the stories of the novelists had never wandered far from the booksellers' shelves, they were nevertheless signed on the dotted line and brought to California to show Hollywood how to make motion pictures. For, despite the addition of sound, the producers were still in the business of making *motion pictures*. However, nobody stopped to think about that at the time. It was just taken for granted that if Hollywood in the future were to make talking pictures, then the chief element in demand would be "talk," and the playwrights and novelists would be the boys who could supply plenty of that.

Now, in fairness to the playwrights and novelists it must be admitted that some of them did turn out some splendid writing jobs as far as mere speech and rhetoric are concerned. Even at its best, however, it was stage dialogue and as a rule not suited to the cinema. The majority of these newly imported scribes, nevertheless, immediately assumed that speech was now the only supremely important element in the cinema, around which all other elements must revolve and become secondary. They entered upon an orgy of dialogue writing which changed the cinema from a motion picture into merely a series of photographed speeches.

They bled the dictionary for subtle and fancy words, they elaborated and stretched out every scene with superfluous and redundant dialogue, they made their characters talk on and on about the most trivial matter while, in the meantime, the plot stood still and audiences became bored to death. These scripts *read* well *before* they were filmed, however, and most producers sat back in awed respect at this great display of high-priced verbiage.

Films became stilted, tedious, deafening. Entire pictures were presented with characters sitting or standing in front of only four or five settings while they mouthed drawn-out and voluminous rhetorical blurbs that were supposed to be clever or fine writing. This continued even after the studios had learned how to move the microphone and otherwise speed up the photoplay with new forms of technique. Fascinated by its ability to inject talk into the cinema, Hollywood was attempting to show the world that it could surpass even Broadway, London, and Paris in the creation of brilliant dialogue. This desire, however worthy, was destined for disappointment. Not only did Broadway, London, and Paris yawn at the attempt, but Peoria, Hickville, and the hinterlands in general either fell fast asleep or called for interpreters to find out what the dialogue was all about.

These developments indicate that Hollywood would have been far better off if it had allowed trained scenarists to continue writing *motion-picture* scripts, simply filling in dialogue, wherever needed, to the best of their abilities. While this dialogue might not have been quite so rhetorical or elegant as that provided by the playwrights, it would have been far more effective, and would not have brought upon the cinema certain ills from which it still suffers.

Only an abrupt falling off in the popularity of talking pictures after they had been in vogue only a few months, added to much competent and pointed criticism by film reviewers of the daily press, brought producers to the realization that the cinema was being talked to death.

The studios immediately announced that they would adopt a policy of less talk and more action in all future productions. Definite and progressive steps were actually made along this line with the result that films began to have more movement, more entertainment value, and wider appeal.

Unhappily, the studios have not carried out this much-to-be-desired policy to its fullest extent. Also, in recent months there have been evidences that some producers seem to have forgotten this previous error and are once again falling into the fault of making their photoplays too verbose.

While playwrights and novelists themselves have a natural inclination to overload their scripts with dialogue, making the mistake of depending more upon speech than action, responsibility cannot be laid entirely at their door.

The studios are equally, if not more, to blame because of demanding and preferring this type of scenario treatment. It is no wonder that as a whole the stage scribes and fiction writers have been a dismal failure in the creation of effective talking pictures when they have relied upon natural tendencies and training brought from other writing fields.

Only those playwrights and novelists who have discarded the forms, formulas, and practices of their previous field, and have made a special study of the true demands of the cinema, have been permanently successful as screen writers. Otherwise, notwithstanding the fact that over the course of the past seven years practically every leading Broadway playwright, and a large percentage of the foremost fiction writers in America, have been brought to Hollywood, *in all that time it would be difficult to point to one important device they have introduced in screen writing, one radical reform of benefit they have made in cinema art, one piece of new technique they have created in scenario construction, or one outstanding example of original screen authorship.*

In the meantime, on the other hand, they have unnecessarily relegated to the background or oblivion much of the valuable and creative technique that had, after many years, made the cinema a distinctive, original, and impressive art form.

One of the chief faults of even present-day dialogue, and an angle which should be given attention by every writer, is that most of it does not advance the plot. A fair percentage of the speeches in the average script might be termed chatter, two or three characters talking about matters which are of no great concern to the story; or if the matter is one of importance, then the characters talk about it incessantly, long after the audience has drawn forth all the necessary facts from the situation. The sophisticated or drawing-room film is usually marked by this sort of gab. When it is extremely clever it is tolerable to cinema audiences. But one also finds much excessive talk throughout all types of scripts, and in all variety of situations, especially in the love scenes.

It would seem as though the scenarist, not knowing whether he has gotten his point over, covers it a second and a third time from additional angles. This hurts rather than helps the situation and in addition slows down the picture as a whole. Writers should learn how to get their point over in the fewest words possible, and once the point has been scored the scene should be terminated promptly.

There are some scenes, of course, which might not be termed as advancing the plot. In this class fall scenes devoted to the presentation of certain character touches, establishing a mood, locale, etc. But when such scenes do not actually advance the story, they should at least build toward some part of it in a manner not already covered. Otherwise they are irrelevant and should be omitted.

Generally speaking, therefore, not only every scene, but every word or speech in a script should contribute definitely toward progressing the plot or else be eliminated. Every script, especially before actual shooting begins, should be gone over with a fine-tooth comb for repetitious and unnecessary dialogue. All speeches which do not keep the story in motion should be weeded out, regardless of whether they are of the so-called "clever" variety or otherwise. Let the cleverness be written into the *necessary* speeches of the photoplay. It is a poor writer who has to continually introduce foreign lines and gags into a script in order to develop cleverness.

Writers recruited from other fields should take particular note of these angles when essaying upon a screen-writing career. Screen dialogue cannot stand the padding or exposition that is customary in stage plays and novels. Padding is one of the favorite resorts in footlight drama and fiction when the author wishes to fill out a plot that is short in situations and subject matter.

On the screen, padding is fatal. The interest must be sustained and accelerated throughout. There are no intermissions, no setting of a book aside at dinner time, to aid the screen author.

Also, the matter of exposition, the relating by dialogue of events which have happened off stage or between acts, should as a rule be *shown* and not talked about on the screen. The dramatist does this by dialogue because the handicaps of the stage allow him no other method. In the cinema there is much that can be far better shown by action than by discourse among characters.

Dialogue which may justly be classed as excellent, expert, and highly successful in the theatre or fiction form may be inept, tiresome, and a complete failure as far as cinema audiences are concerned. This is mainly for two reasons:

1. As previously pointed out, a photoplay once started on the screen runs to its conclusion. There are no breaks. A sustained and increasing interest is required. Dialogue on the stage or in literature which depends upon sheer cleverness or brilliance may be effective when it is consumed for short periods broken up by rests or intermissions, but it does not sustain itself with the average film patron when presented in one continuous stretch, any more than it would sustain itself with the average person if it were offered without break in fiction or stage drama.
2. The average patron of the drama and of literature is a more intellectual type, is more interested in smart conversation, dissertation, and psychology than the average cinema patron. It has been conclusively proved that the masses who dominate the success of the cinema are not so much interested in clever discourse, discussion, or oral comment upon life's affairs and problems as they are in action, pictorial appeal, and ordinary, straightforward entertainment. Generally speaking, they journey to the cinema, not to think, but to enjoy themselves. Therefore, regardless of our personal preferences a quaintly humorous and down-to-earth line written by a Dickens or a Will Rogers is in the cinema always more appealing and effective with the general public than the most brilliant line by a Shaw or a Wilde.

I do not wish to infer by this that there is no place on the screen for brilliant speech nor that writers should refrain from all attempt to write clever dialogue. There is ample room and need for this type of film authorship. What I wish to emphasize is that smart or clever dialogue merely for its own sake is futile and can play no significant part in the future development of the photoplay, either as an art form or as a public diversion. Such writing should be confined to the drama and literature.

Clever discourse, to be of value to the appeal and progress of the cinema, must at all times be a part of the plot, not an interjection. It should unfold as a natural part of the story, not by sacrifice of plot movement and scene action, which are the very mainsprings of photoplay success.

Real excellence of dialogue in the films does not call for obvious elegance or brilliance. To the contrary, not only is the ostentatious display of such qualities apt to detract from the general value of the scenes, but it often reveals an incompetency as well as a pretentiousness on the part of the writer. Realism, naturalness, and sincerity are the hallmarks of true merit in dialogue.

Good film dialogue does not require flashy eloquence or superficial wit, despite the fact that this erroneous impression is still held by some writers and studios. It lies in achieving the best results in plot and character building in the fewest possible number of appropriate words. Simple, rugged, everyday speech often carries more power and conviction in the mouths of screen characters than all the flowery blurbs yet written by filmland's "word florists."

The aim should be, not for surface lustre nor forced glitter, but for mood, feeling, and naturalness in an unstrained manner. Let the scenes be written true to life and the characters be flesh-and-blood creations. That is the correct test by which to judge a writer's real abilities as a photoplaywright.

It is readily admitted that some pictures may be successfully presented with artificial characters and forced smartness in dialogue. There was ample evidence of this in the many sophisticated pictures which were presented a season or two ago with temporarily favorable box-office results. These offerings, however, appealed only to a certain portion of theatregoers. The general public finally rebelled against them to such an extent that empty theatres threw a large part of the film industry into bankruptcy. There will always be a demand from certain theatregoers for a few flashily written films, but for permanent, substantial success in the average photoplay, the keynotes of screen writing should be *simplicity* and *sincerity*.

Particularly should this apply to love scenes, the very part of the film in which the average Hollywood writer today attempts to go into a poetical frenzy, and smothers a romantic situation under a harangue of gush which he apparently believes is more passionate than Byron, more subtle than Shakespeare, and more soulful than Dante.

If there exists any portion whatsoever of a cinema in which actions speak louder than words then it is certainly in scenes of ardent love-making. Here, at least, the writer should rely upon tender glances and caresses midst a romantic setting to do the talking. The cinema scribe in burdening such scenes with superfluous chatter is not only misusing his medium, but he will never be able to equal, much less excel, other institutions. To *read* a beautiful love scene, one chooses a book; to *hear* a beautiful love scene, one selects a play; but when one goes to the cinema it is with the desire to *see* a beautiful love scene.

Convincing romantic scenes are among the most difficult to write in the photoplay. They call not merely for ardent words and terms, but for real creative writing in the way of bits of business, touches, the introduction of sentimental action, "props," etc. The problem lies not in knowing how much, but how little dialogue may be interposed in the scene.

This, as a matter of fact, may be said to apply to many parts of a photoplay in addition to its love scenes. For, despite the impression that seems to exist in some circles, it is far easier to write good or original dialogue than it is to create good or original action and business. This is conclusively proved beyond the realm of any controversy by the fact that Hollywood is full and overflowing with men and women who are noted as being able to write "good dialogue"; and the country is loaded with others who could be shipped to the studios on a moment's notice. *Yet, in all Hollywood, after years of importing writers from all over the globe, there is scarcely a handful of scribes who can create fine touches and clever business, clever twists, and original situations.*

Often one man is found sufficient to write the dialogue for a film, but today it takes anywhere from three to twenty other writers to prepare the rest of the story and scenario to the satisfaction of producers! This evidence alone should definitely settle which type of screen writing demands the greater talent and versatility.

Taking the business of screen writing as a whole, fiction writers and novelists have contributed more to the cinema, have adapted themselves quicker and with less resentment than the playwrights. The novelists from previous training are accustomed to visualizing their works in terms of action and on a wider scope. They grasp the technique of the photoplay with better aptitude. Further, notwithstanding the contention of the dramatists, the cinema as a form of plot presentation is as a whole more closely allied to literature than to the stage.

If one were to pick the best screen writers in Hollywood today, including the ability to write the most compelling and genuinely effective dialogue, as well as good pictorial scripts, the list would contain almost exclusively the names of men and women who are close students of film technique and use speech only as an *adjunct* to action and plot.

In justice to the novelists it should be noted that some producers have a habit of enticing fiction writers of revealed talent to the studios, then making little or no attempt to take advantage of their abilities. These writers are often installed in studio offices, then neglected for several months, no help, advice, or cooperation being extended to widen their film knowledge and aid them in contributing something worth while to the cinema. At the end of their contracts they are shipped back home, labeled as "failures."

In dealing with the subject of dialogue most of the comments in this chapter have dealt with the fundamental principles and purposes of cinema dialogue, as it should be handled by students and professionals interested in advancing the photoplay and utilizing the cinema in its most effective form.

From the strictly practical viewpoint, to the writer who is primarily interested in his commercial advancement, or cashing in quickly on his efforts, I would strenuously advise that, for the present, at least, he concentrate on dialogue in preference to action. Speeches should be written as flowery and clever as possible.

Notwithstanding the fundamental faults of this type of screen story, the majority of producers are still impressed by it, still favor it. It will probably be another season or two before a swing in the other direction arrives. In the meantime, it is absurd and pointless for the practical scenarist to buck against the situation. The producers are the ones who are paying out the money, and for success the writer should give them what they want.

Even in the penning of descriptive, narrative, and action parts of the story or script, I would strongly urge that the writer use as many colorful, elegant, and euphonious words as possible. Every effort should be expended to make the writing of the scenario itself seem polished or superior in descriptive talent.

None of these word elements, of course, can be either photographed by the camera or recorded by the sound apparatus, but they aid greatly in selling the story to the supervisor or producer. This may seem a bit ironical but it is nevertheless true.

If a story reads well it is usually purchased regardless of how it will photograph or record as a piece of cinema entertainment. The astute writer aiming at professional progress should cater to this unique situation and not worry about his own ideals or opinions.

CHAPTER VI

Tempo and Rhythm

BEFORE offering any comment on the subjects that come under this chapter heading, let us first get the definitions of tempo and rhythm firmly fixed in our minds.

Tempo is the relative speed or rate of movement of the story as it unfolds from beginning to end. In some respects it may also be defined as the characteristic pace in which the situations or plot are told.

Rhythm is a regular or harmonious beat or accent to movement or sound; movement or sound marked by some regularly recurring accent or quantity.

Tempo—or pace, as it is sometimes called in the studios—is a well-known element in the cinema and was much utilized by some film craftsmen even in the days of the silent picture.

Rhythm, as it applies to the screen story, is an element that we sometimes read about, or hear discussed, in a profound manner. As far as the present-day cinema is concerned, however, it is a much overtalked and little practiced theory. The one exception to this, of course, is in regard to musical films, and with the rhythm of music we are not here concerned.

There have been attempts by certain observers to stress the importance of rhythm in the writing of dialogue. Such theories seem to be largely a matter of imagination or exaggeration. Certainly, a searching analysis of the most artistic and successful cinemas—or for that matter even the most generally accredited stage plays—fails to reveal any significant degree of works which owe their effectiveness to rhythm of either dialogue or action.

Rhythm in dialogue is not nearly so important as tempo and contrast. Some observers, through misunderstanding or faulty analysis, have possibly confused rhythm with these two latter elements.

Rhythm, as we have observed in the above definition, is sound or movement marked by some *regularly recurrent beat or accent.* Thus, in writing *dialogue* to rhythm, the idea would be to write lines where one character makes speeches of a certain length, while another character delivers lines of a shorter length, and to continue this pattern throughout a scene with such regularity that it produces a rhythm.

On the other hand, if the desire is to give rhythm to the *movement* of the film, then the theory is to cut one group of scenes at a certain length, and alternate or intercut these with scenes of a shorter length, and to continue this exact pattern of alternate scene lengths with a regularity that gives it a rhythm.

As for the proposition of writing dialogue on this principle, it is a rather farfetched and overrated theory, and certainly not in keeping with the most commendable or practical ideals of screen writing. Such stunts may be indulged in for an occasional experimental or "clinical" film, but as a whole they can be classed as freakish rather than sound photo drama. They offer no substantial or worth-while avenues for the cinema, either as an entertainment or an art.

To begin with, dialogue written for the mere sake of rhythm is artificial, forced, and pretentious. At best, it would be "arty" instead of genuinely artistic. Sincerity, authenticity, and realism of dialogue are not only more convincing and effective, but they represent a higher form of cinema. These, rather than rhythm, are the elements that should be striven for in screen writing. There are some film students and groups, however, who are much interested in rhythmic dialogue and effects, and we may expect a few noteworthy innovations along this line in forthcoming films.

Regarding rhythm in the movement of scenes, there are occasionally incidents which may be dealt with in this intercutting manner, but they are very rare, and even then this must be accomplished by the film cutter, not the author. It is achieved with shears, not a typewriter. The exact footage of each scene must be measured, then intercut with scenes of a longer, or shorter, footage to produce the necessary accent, or rhythm. The writer may suggest in his script that certain scenes be cut in this manner, but he cannot personally effect it.

On the other hand, *tempo*, or the relative pace in which the dialogue is presented and the action of the story told, is a most important and helpful factor in the cinema. As has been pointed out in an earlier chapter, some types of stories are most suitably told in one tempo, while other subjects respond better to another pace; *i.e.*, melodramas in fast tempo, romantic love stories in a moderate or leisurely tempo, etc.

Contrast in dialogue, wherein one character speaks in longer or more emphatic speeches than another character, may also be used to advantage in writing many dramatic scenes. This style is not to be confused with rhythm, wherein the long and short speeches must be delivered with definite recurrent regularity. With contrast, there need be no definite regularity in the length of the two speeches, but an interesting comparison of the personalities and emotions of the two characters is created by having one deliver long speeches and the other respond in briefer terms.

Producing correct tempo in the cinema is, unfortunately, not solely dependent upon the writer. The situation here is quite different than exists in regard to the stage drama or the literary field.

In the case of a footlight offering, the playwright usually attends the rehearsals and aids in the direction of the play. He makes many changes in the script during rehearsal, revising and improving its pace and delivery. Even after the dress rehearsals and the first two or three opening performances he is able to make deletions or changes that improve its tempo.

The novelist may make final revisions in his manuscript and then rest secure in the knowledge that it will go forth to the public in the exact tempo in which he conceived it.

In the cinema, however, the creation of tempo is a three-way proposition in which the film cutter and the director, as well as the writer, play prominent parts. After the author or scenarist has completed his share of the work, it is then up to the director to execute the *staging* of the piece in the right tempo. Finally, after the director has completed the shooting of the script, the business of putting the scenes together, of editing the photoplay, rests upon the shoulders of the film cutter.

Not only does the screen writer or scenarist have no control over the direction of the story, but he takes no part in the actual editing or cutting of the scenes after they have been shot. This applies not only to writers-at-large, *but to professional studio writers who are actually on the scene in Hollywood and under contract to the studio which is making the production.*

This may seem a rather strange and faulty arrangement to many observers, but experienced producers assert that it is the best system. Professional studio writers offer no objection to it. They are content to resign the editing of the film, and the final pattern of scenes, to the film cutter and the supervisor of the production.

Of course, after the film has been put through its first or second "rough cut," it is given a runoff in the studio projection room, and later a studio preview at one of the local suburban theatres for observation purposes. At these showings the writers, along with many other members of the various production staffs, are in attendance and now offer suggestions as to possible changes or improvements.

Except in remote instances, this is the only active part taken by the writer in the editing of the film. After assembling the scenes in their first rough cut, the film editor may decide to make many minor alterations in the continuity of the scenes, actually deleting a number of shots that were in the original script. With the consent of the supervisor or producer, he may even delete an entire sequence. All this has a definite bearing upon the final tempo of the story. Perhaps, for example, through no fault of the writer, the director has handled the players and scenes in too slow a tempo. The film cutter is then forced to resort to editing tricks and devices to speed up the pace and eliminate the draggy spots.

Or, perhaps the writer himself *was* somewhat to blame; he may have overwritten certain situations and these were not properly weighed and revised prior to placing the script in production. The editor is then later compelled to use his scissors or rearrange situations to correct this fault.

So we see that there are some phases of cinema tempo over which the writer wields no power. However, as observed in an earlier chapter, the film editor today has few tricks and devices available to speed up and revise a story, especially when drastic changes are necessary.

Therefore it is most important that the writer do everything in his power in contributing to holding his script in the right tempo before it is turned over for camera work.

This he can do by, first of all, selecting the most effective story structure and style of treatment for the subject in preparation, as outlined in Chaps. III and IV; then steadfastly adhering to these in the handling of both his dialogue and his action.

Next, although the writer has nothing to do with the actual editing of the film, he *can* accomplish much through a careful and painstaking final editing of his own script prior to its being offered for production. His efforts in this direction should be:

1. Going thoroughly over his completed script, sizing it up, analyzing it, criticizing it.
2. Combing it, pruning it, eliminating anything in dia-

logue or action that appears to be padding, superfluous, repetitious, or which seems to impede the smoothness and pace of the story as a whole.

3. Creating new incidents and touches, and rewriting dialogue where any points of the story can be gotten over more quickly or effectively, without sacrificing coherence, smoothness, or any other necessary values.

In other words, it is one thing for a writer to sit down and dash off a creative cinema work—be it original story or continuity; but merely because it seemed to run along smoothly when he wrote it is no proof that by later analysis and effort he cannot find ways to revise it, condense it, or make it more harmonious as a whole.

He must see to it that his scenes, in both action and dialogue, are written in the mood of the particular situation with which they deal; he must make certain that the action and dialogue are in harmony with the character of the situation.

Examples:

1. *The Informer.* In the early part of this screen play, when Gypo Nolan is conceiving and executing his plan to turn his friend over to the police, the mood and tempo are slow. After he turns informer and secures the £20 reward money, the pace quickens a bit, gradually gaining more momentum as Gypo becomes drunk, and the plot builds to a climax. When Gypo is brought to trial by his comrades and sentenced to death, the tempo drops back to slow again, in order to get over the psychological aspects of this situation. When Gypo breaks through the roof and escapes, is pursued and shot, the tempo accelerates rapidly, the scenes and dialogue are limited and brief. After Gypo has been shot, and he staggers over into the church and begs forgiveness, the pace is now retarded to give proper emphasis to the final scenes of this unusual story, and the man's soul redemption.

2. *A Tale of Two Cities.* The story opens at a moderate pace. Sidney Carton's meeting with the girl is presented in leisurely tempo, as befits the romantic beginning of this tale.

When the action shifts back to France and deals with the undercurrent of unrest among the populace, the scenes are handled more tersely and speedily. As the revolution breaks out into the open and we see the storming of the Bastille, the tempo is at once rapidly accelerated by means of quick and flash shots of intermingled close-ups and long shots of the people, fighting, the Bastille, and the soldiers. Later, when Sidney Carton sacrifices himself and goes to the guillotine, the tempo slows down, the scenes become longer, the speech of the characters slower, to lend proper dramatic value and weight to the bigness of Carton's self-martyrdom.

One important point that should be observed and stressed here is that all comparative speeds and changes of tempo in any production are largely dependent upon their relation to what has been set as the *general tempo* of the story. In other words, if a leisurely type of construction form has been selected for the telling of the story, then any quickening of the pace at any point will give this story a sense of acceleration, make it seem to move more quickly, even though the story as a whole may be in leisurely tempo. If, on the other hand, the general form of a story is fast, then it must be given even greater speed in any situation where the desire is to get over a rapid tempo.

Tempo then, as it applies to each production, is a question of comparison, a matter of *contrasts*. There is (*a*) what might be termed the *key* tempo of the story, as set by the form of construction selected for its telling, and (*b*) the various secondary tempos used in certain situations, and which for effect are dependent upon their *contrast* with the main key tempo of the story.

CHAPTER VII

Camera Angles and Effects

A CLEAR knowledge of the various camera angles and devices now in vogue, their possibilities and advantages, is of decided value to the screen writer. They assist him in the matter of creating both movement and tempo. By treating his scenes with the right shots, by expert use of the lap dissolves, montage, time lapses, and transitions, he can give the story smoothness, evenness, and harmony, and aid in producing whatever pace is desired.

Such devices should not be used indiscriminately, nor resorted to for the mere purpose of trickiness in an effort to amaze. In this event they are only apt to defeat their own ends and detract from the story rather than improve it. Good taste, sincerity, and a respect for the highest standards of cinema technique should be the guideposts here.

The principal camera angles and effects in use today are as follows:

The Fade-in and Fade-out. The fade is used to produce a slow or gradual opening or closing of a sequence, or portion of the story. The *fade-in* implies the *beginning* of a new chain of thought or episode. Fades are used for purposes of separation, a gradual change from one phase of the story to another, or for a definite break between certain periods in the story. The *fade-out ends* a chain of thought.

The Dissolve-out and Dissolve-in. The dissolve is used as a link. It gives a connective feeling between two different scenes, or settings. It bridges over from one situation to another without a jarring break of action, and without need for explanatory matter. We may show the exterior of a home, then by dissolving out of this shot and dissolving into a bedroom we have taken the audience into the interior of the home. Or we may dissolve out on a man as he leaves his house and dissolve in on him as he enters his private office, thus eliminating needless intervening scenes. Again, the dissolve may be used merely to weave two portions or episodes of a story smoothly together, regardless of whether there is any close connection between them. We can, for instance, dissolve out on one group of characters in Los Angeles and dissolve in on another group of characters in Paris if no abrupt break in the movement of the story is desired. The dissolve, in short, is both a link and a blend.

The Lap Dissolve. This device is simply the speeding up of the dissolve-out and dissolve-in by having the ending of one overlap the beginning of the other. Apart from the matter of acceleration, it is used for fundamentally the same purposes as the two devices when used without overlapping.

The Wipe. A modern device often used in place of a quick dissolve, but for the same purpose. Instead of dissolving out, however, the scene changes by means of various tricky designs. It is more rapid than the dissolve.

The Time Lapse. This is an old and comparatively simple device, although it is open to many new variations. It eliminates needless scenes. Its purpose is to cover a lapse of time without any intervening scenes, or titles.

For example:

1. A passing of a few hours can be shown by dissolving out on a clock which says eight o'clock, and dissolving in again with the hands set at 12 o'clock, denoting the passing of four hours.
2. Guests may be shown sitting down to dinner and, as the first course is served, the scene dissolves out, then dissolves back in on a table of empty dishes, conveying the fact that the meal has been finished.
3. A young man is waiting for his girl. He lights a cigarette. The scene dissolves out, then in again, and he is now surrounded

by eight or ten cigarette butts on the floor. He is still waiting.

4. We see a wild party in progress, a bottle of champagne is taken from a full case and opened. The scene dissolves out and in again and we now see empty bottles and glasses scattered all over the table. The party is all over.

5. For a longer time lapse: A little girl is shown having a party. The camera comes to a close-up of a birthday cake on which is written, "To Maria, August 12th, 1926." This slowly dissolves into another cake with more candles on it, and the inscription now reads: "To Maria, August 12th, 1936." We know that ten years have passed.

Transition. This device is used to convey quickly and smoothly a change of place, condition, or action, or to afford contrast between people or things. In so doing it also often covers a lapse of time. The *transition* is an excellent device and offers wide opportunity for the creative talent of the writer.

In addition to being used for geographical transitions, it can also be utilized in presenting quick and effective pictorial comparisons between different classes or types of people, as, for example, betwixt a rich man and a laborer, or a generous spender and a tight-fisted penny pincher, or a finely groomed society woman and a poor working girl. Audiences not only promptly grasp the significance of this pictorial method of characterization and plot, but it has a very forceful and convincing effect upon them. Neither dialogue nor written titles can be half so impressive, and it is making a more logical use of photoplay technique.

EXAMPLES:

1. In a café scene in New York. The camera comes to a close-up of the drummer as he pounds his bass drum. This scene dissolves slowly out and as we gradually hear the beat of another drum become audible, a close-up of an East Indian native beating a tom-tom comes into view. The scene has smoothly and clearly shifted from Broadway to the Orient. It can imply the same day or a later period, depending upon what other facts are introduced.

2. It is Christmas Day. We see a wealthy boy surrounded by many toys. The camera moves to a close-up of a particular costly gift, possibly an electric engine. As the engine moves along its miniature track, the scene dissolves into a cheap tin engine being pushed along the floor, and we find another and poorer child with the only toy he has received for his Christmas. This type of transition gets over not only a change of place, but a contrast of circumstances.

3. A man is seen on a fishing trip in the mountains. He catches a fish, tosses it into his basket. As a close-up reveals the fish flapping in the bottom of the basket, this dissolves into a scene of the fish in a frying pan. The camera drops back and we see the man's wife cooking the fish—the man is back home again. We know at once that his vacation is over, yet all scenes of his packing or leaving the mountains have been eliminated.

4. Pat O'Brien, a Boston cop, is riding down the street in a police car. He is discussing his old father, Dennis O'Brien, with a fellow officer. The scene changes to a close-up of a wheel on the police car whirling around. This dissolves into another whirling wheel which we soon observe to be a wooden cart wheel, and as the camera drops back for a long shot we see an old man driving down an Irish country road in a wagon with "Dennis O'Brien" marked on it. It needs no further explanation to tell us that this is Pat's father and that the scene has shifted from Boston to Ireland.

The Lap-dissolve Sequence. For covering certain phases of a story rapidly, yet graphically, this is perhaps the most useful and important device that the screen writer has at his command. The lap-dissolve sequence is in essence a group of scenes made up of either: (1) a series of time lapses; (2) a series of transitions; (3) a mixture of both time lapses and transitions. Its purpose is to show by brief highlights, rather than detailed action, certain events or activities considered essential to either plot or character development, but which need not be pictured in full.

EXAMPLES:

1. If, for instance, there is need for showing the hasty mar-

riage and quick divorce of a modern young couple, without the necessity for any fully covered action in between these two events, this is gotten over by a series of shots. First, showing a close-up of their hands as the clergyman completes the ceremony and the bridegroom slips the ring on the bride's finger. The scene then immediately lap dissolves into another close-up showing hands on the top of a judge's bench, or in a lawyer's office, in which a man's hands are seen passing the final divorce document into the former bride's hands, the date and name on the divorce paper revealing any time lapse desired. Such a device tells the audience everything required; yet consumes only a few feet of film.

2. Perhaps we wish to show the decline of a once successful and powerful man. The camera first reveals him well dressed, prosperous looking, standing at the bar of a smart, luxurious café, the camera irising down to his well-groomed hand as he lifts an expensive cocktail to his lips; then a quick lap dissolve to the same hand, only more unkempt, at the bar of a medium-class saloon, pouring out a drink of cheap whisky; then finally another lap dissolve to the same hand, now rough and dirty, toying with a glass of beer in a cheap grog shop. The man's degeneration has been established without lengthy explanation.

3. For an example requiring wider treatment, let us suppose that our story deals with a hero who is an adventurer, a seeker of excitement. There is a stretch in the story where we not only wish to convey a passing of ten years, but also desire to show the restless spirit of the man, his indifference to death, the many hazards he encounters. Instead of consuming a great deal of footage in picturing these many years and events, we do it in short, highlighted scenes: (1) He is shown in the desert fighting Arabs as a member of the Foreign Legion. (2) He is with a big game expedition in Africa and shoots an elephant just as it charges down on him. (3) He is seen fighting Chinese pirates in the Asiatic seas. (4) We view him in a rickety old airplane, smuggling guns into a Latin-American country, as the enemy shoots at him from below and wounds him. (5) We see him in a hand-to-hand fight with South Sea cannibals as they attempt to board his small sloop. (6) We see him taken down with fever as he attempts to penetrate into some unexplored jungle. (7) We

view him as he arrives back in New York on an old tramp steamer, tired and older looking, as we now prepare once again to take up the thread of the main dramatic action of the story. There is, in fact, no end to the variety or extent of treatment to which the lap-dissolve sequence offers possibilities.

Montage. This is another cinema device that consists of a series of quick shots, presented to convey certain facts or thoughts. Unlike the lap-dissolve sequence, which offers a chain of incidents or events in a definitely planned, progressive order, montage consists of a random mixture of brief scenes or impressions thrown together in a more or less scrambled style. In montage, it is the effect of the shots *as a whole* that counts, rather than the stressing of any particular incident. Also, with montage, the scenes are usually much shorter—just flash shots—and many of them come one on top of the other without individual dissolves. In addition to giving us a sort of kaleidoscopic view of a condition, locale, or event, it is excellent for getting over difficult psychological points in a story.

EXAMPLES:

1. The picture opens at a country fair. Before introducing the characters or starting the story, montage is used to get the audience into the spirit and feel of the background by means of a mixture of shots: (1) A glimpse of the ferris wheels turning. (2) The fair band playing. (3) A thoroughbred sow with a litter of pigs. (4) A "hot dog" stand doing a rushing business. (5) A horse race just as the animals break the barrier. (6) A pickpocket lifting a man's purse from his pocket. (7) A crowd watching a youth as he throws baseballs at a negro's head, etc. These scenes come rapidly on top of each other, sometimes by means of direct cut, sometimes by quick dissolves, giving the general idea of the color and activity at a fairgrounds.

2. In *A Tale of Two Cities*, when the truck driver dropped and broke the wine barrel in the street, montage was used to convey the excitement and desire of the starving, pauperized citizens. It was accomplished by quick shots of loafers running from the street corners, women sticking their heads out of

windows, men dashing out of houses with utensils to scoop up some of the precious wine, youngsters shouting with glee, others lying on their stomachs and drinking the wine from the gutter, a general bedlam as all try to secure some of the valued liquid.

3. In *Peter Ibbetson*, the building of the Countess' stable is conveyed by mingled shots of a carpenter driving nails into the framework, a man mixing cement and mortar, Ibbetson working on the specifications, another carpenter as he saws boards, a glimpse of the model from which they are working, another craftsman putting on the finishing touches, etc. Montage can also be used to great advantage in graphically presenting the high spots of warfare, famines, strikes, floods, hurricanes, coronations, holidays, or any exciting or gala event which is susceptible to impressionistic treatment.

Truck Shots. In these shots, as the name implies, the camera is mounted on a truck, or dolly, so that the camera can move about as the scene is played. This shot is helpful in giving movement to a scene when the characters are compelled to remain in one place, although it is often utilized when the characters are moving about. It can also be used for emphasis, or for eliminating the necessity for two camera set-ups in getting both a long shot and a close-up of important characters.

EXAMPLES:

1. The scene opens on a long shot revealing the interior of a department store on a busy day, with customers milling about, making purchases, etc. Then the camera begins to *truck up* through an aisle and toward one of the counters. It continues forward until it reaches the counter and comes to a close-up of one of the salesgirls, who, instead of attending to the customers, is reading a letter. By this sort of treatment we have captured the atmosphere and activity of the setting, then moved to a close-up of the heroine without changing the camera set-up or causing a break in the flow of story movement.

2. Again, for variety of treatment this same above scene may be handled exactly in reverse. We could open on a close-up of a girl reading a letter (without knowing at this time where

she is), then as the girl peruses the note the camera *trucks back* through an aisle, and, as the camera vision widens we see that the scene is a busy department store, that the girl reading the letter is apparently oblivious to the activity going on around her, etc.

Dolly Shots, Perambulator Shots. Another name for truck shots, and used for the same purposes.

Pan Shots. Pan is short for panorama. The pan shot is used for swinging the view from one side of the set to the other, or for keeping the focus on a particular character as he travels sidewise from one point to another. No truck or dolly is necessary, the camera head being merely swung or "panned" by means of a lever attached to the apparatus. This shot also gives movement in confined situations, and it allows us to stay with a character as he walks from one place to another and goes through certain business.

EXAMPLE:

Or, we may open the scene on a young man in a barber shop, getting a hair cut, then pan the camera over and pick up the heroine, a manicurist at a table, as she works on the fingers of a flirtatious traveling salesman, etc.

Moving Shots. In most respects this shot is similar to a truck or dolly shot, and, in Hollywood jargon, is often used synonymously with these. Some studio writers, however, use this specifically when they mean that both the camera truck and a character, or characters, in the scene are to move together.

EXAMPLE:

The scene opens showing a policeman talking to a detective on a street corner. They part, and as the detective walks along the sidewalk searching the faces of passers-by, the camera moves ahead of him, keeping focused upon him at a consistently even distance. Moving shots have great value but should be used only when the action shown is important.

Follow Shot. This shot is also often used synonymously with a truck shot and a moving shot. Specifically, however, it means that the camera *follows* the character in the scene, instead of moving ahead of him.

EXAMPLE:

In the case of the above-cited instance of the detective walking down the street, we would now see him from the rear. The camera would travel behind him, instead of ahead of him, as he strode along, looking for his quarry.

Reverse Shots. These are used to show the scene from the opposite angle of a previous shot; often used in punching home the reaction of different characters in a dramatic or romantic scene.

EXAMPLES:

1. The first shot is over the hero's shoulder, focused on the heroine's face as she hands him back his engagement ring. The next shot is a *reverse* angle, over the girl's shoulder and focused on the man's face as he takes the ring and reacts to her rejection.

2. Reverse shots can be used for long shots as well as close-ups. We may show the interior of a café as seen from the entrance; then follow this with a reverse shot of the café as viewed from a table at the rear, which now takes in the entrance from the other side of the room. This is good technique and relieves the monotony of straight-on camera angles.

Freak Shots. Any strange or unusual camera angle is termed a freak, or trick, shot. Thus, placing the camera so low to the ground that people, or horses, seem to pass over it; or placing it high above the heads of the characters, so that the camera appears to be shooting down upon them from the ceiling, are two types of freak shots. Trick angles are often secured by shooting through windows, transoms, doors, skylights, etc. These are effective when used logically and sparingly, but when overplayed are apt to become tiresome as well as annoying to audiences in general. However, there is opportunity in every story for utilization of a few such novelty camera angles. Many of these are conceived by the director or cameraman while the film is being shot, but the writer should also endeavor to suggest any unusual camera angles that strike his imagination when writing a scene.

CHAPTER VIII

How Stories Are Handled

THERE are several different styles or forms in which a story may be written for the consideration and possible purchase of the studio. These are, principally:

1. Synopsis form.
2. Fiction form.
3. Play form.
4. As a full-length continuity.
5. As a treatment or adaptation.

The more important of these various methods are presented in detail in the latter part of this volume. Some writers prefer one form, some another. Also, certain types of stories often lend themselves better or more easily to a particular style of presentation.

Before deciding upon the exact technique of writing which he wishes to adopt, it is imperative that the author have a clear knowledge of the inner workings of a studio, the manner in which submitted stories are handled by the scenario departments, the channels through which they must pass, the test and obstacles they must survive before acceptance or rejection.

While studios differ somewhat in the exact routine of their scenario departments, the means and methods of procedure, fundamentally, are the same in all the important producing organizations. Some studios have just one staff, which is known as the Scenario Department. Other studios have split the work between two groups, one known as the

Story Department, which considers and handles all unpurchased stories; the other, termed the Scenario Department, which controls writers on the studio pay roll and all stories which have been purchased and are being made ready for shooting. But under these and other divisions or arrangements, the routine through which a submitted story must pass is pretty much the same.

A story, in whatever form presented, upon receipt by the scenario department is first turned over to one of the reading staff. There is no variance in this, with the exception of the case of a supervisor or producer having especially asked for some particular story that has been brought to his attention. Even in this event, it should be noted, the supervisor or producer will seldom, if ever, read the story first himself, but will hand it to some minor member of his personal corps to peruse and appraise. I shall offer additional comment on this a little further on. Occasionally, some feature of a story, usually the author's name, will catch the scenario editor's eye and he may read it personally. Even then, whether he likes it or not, it will later be turned over to the regular reading staff.

As a rule, members of the reading staff are an individual group whose sole purpose is to peruse stories, "boil" them down into brief synopsis form, and offer a few comments upon their faults and virtues. They have no authority, and little weight, in the purchase of a story. The producers and higher studio executives reserve these duties and decisions for themselves.

Studio readers, in fact, offer very little comment upon the merits or demerits of a story. They usually content themselves with a few casual and indefinite comments. Speaking plainly, cinema reading staffs might more accurately be called synopsis writers. This is their chief and only important function. This is not said in especial criticism of the readers, for, even if they did offer more vital comment on stories it is doubtful whether supervisors or producers would pay any attention to their remarks.

Now such a situation, which has become more broadly established since the development of the talking picture, is an extremely important angle for the writer to know and study. It means that his story, after he has spent weeks or months in preparing it exactly as he thinks it should best be presented, *is, in all probability, not going to be read by any of the story-buying executives as he wrote it.* Instead, it is to be glimpsed by a minor reader, who will make a quick synopsis of it, and turn this secondary version over to the buying executives.

I wish again to emphasize that systems and policies vary somewhat in the different studios. Some give a fairer and more competent reading than others. The facts given here, however, are what must be faced at the average studio.

The length of the average synopsis made by a studio reader, regardless of the length or form in which the original work was presented, is from 300 to 1,500 words. Only occasionally does one run over 1,500 words.

This means that much of what the author has written into his work, many of its touches, impressive incidents, character shadings, and other creative and individual points, are lost. Usually even the mood, feeling, and underlying sympathy of the situations are ignored. The synopsis as a rule becomes a bare outline of plot, a cut-and-dried summary with only meagre attempts to convey other qualities revealed in the work.

Sometimes, when a reader is greatly impressed with the story, he will make an effort to represent some of the author's original values. On the other hand, if the reader should not happen personally to care for the story, he will dash off a very perfunctory synopsis regardless of what virtues the opus may have. Now, as stated before, the reader cannot be wholly blamed for this. It is the fault of the system.

After the reader has written a synopsis of the story, copies are made of it and sent to the various members of the story board, who may number anywhere from three to a dozen, depending upon the studio. This story board often consists of supervisors and unit producers as well as higher executives of the story or scenario department.

Members of the story board read these synopses in their spare time, after which they are made the subject for discussion at special board meetings. Certain members may favor a story, others can see nothing in it. The yarn is pulled apart and subjected to every type of criticism and speculation. Bear in mind that, as a general rule, the majority of these board members are weighing the story from what they know of it after reading a synopsis hastily written by a poorly paid reader, who is compelled to handle this important work in a manner far from in keeping with its significance.

Occasionally, one of the supervisors or board members becomes interested in the story outline and sends for the original script to examine. If he then still favors it he will comment upon this at the meeting, stating that he has read the author's work, that it is excellent and contains much of value that is not shown in the synopsis. If the virtues which he points out are impressive, and other members of the board are already interested in the story, then such additional evidence goes a long way in selling the work. This is an important point for writers to note.

In general, however, especially in the case of the unknown or lesser known author, no such favorable circumstance is apt to happen at the first board meeting regarding a story, which is a mighty critical one in the career of a manuscript. The opus is quite likely to rise or fall purely on the basis of only a reader's synopsis.

It is in this respect that the well-known or famous author has a considerable advantage over his more obscure brothers. Members of the scenario board are far more prone to ask to inspect the original script of a noted writer than they are that of an unknown name. This, however, is a natural and pardonable tendency, the reward for established ability in almost any line of endeavor.

It explains, nevertheless, one of the main but not well-recognized reasons why so many well-known novels and plays are purchased. In most instances the producers and heads of the story board have either read these works, seen them in the theatre, or heard them widely discussed before they are brought up for consideration. Therefore they have beneficial knowledge additional to that contained in the reader's synopsis. As this relates to already published or produced works, with which we are not here chiefly concerned, further comment is needless.

Each week, after all submitted stories for that period have been considered, the few voted by the story board as good prospects for purchase are set aside for further consideration, while the remainder are eliminated and returned.

In the case of these favorably reported stories, longer synopses are now made, treating them in greater detail and with more consideration for the author's original work. Synopses of this "recommended" or "possibility" list may run as high as 2,500 words in length. Copies are then passed out to producers, supervisors, and other executives who are not members of the story board, to secure their reactions and comments.

Some studios publish a weekly mimeographed bulletin containing these more lengthy synopses of the so-called best bets of the week. This bulletin is then used as the basis for the final conference on the week's cargo of stories.

In either method, it should be observed that the great majority of stories are first judged on the grounds of a short, usually colorless, synopsis, and are only treated in a longer summary *after* they have won favorable attention from scenario heads. At the final weekly story conference, the approved list is further sifted and those fully approved are purchased.

This is obviously a very slipshod way of handling stories, but it is a situation which the writer must face. He should take it into full consideration when preparing and submitting his story. The scenario departments are not wholly to blame for the establishment of such indifferent methods. They contend, and there is justification for their argument, that it is not only next to impossible to get supervisors, producers, and higher up executives to read original works as submitted, but it is extremely difficult to persuade them to peruse even 2,000-word synopses unless these are from latest Broadway hits or best sellers. From long personal experience in the studios I can testify to the truth of this predicament on the part of scenario staffs.

Consequently, scenario departments assert, submitted stories must be boiled down by the reading staffs, especially those stories submitted in any great length. I shall not attempt to enter here into a discussion of how this could be remedied. Sufficient to say, it is a very ineffectual system, hard on the writer, and very costly to the studios. Too much now depends upon the tastes and inclinations of one or two individuals, and what they personally would like to see on the screen, rather than the taking of a dispassionate attitude, weighing stories on the basis of what the public wants, and how the story will click at the box office.

Two or three seasons ago, I was a member of the story board at one of the big studios, and during the course of a twelve-month period suggested and urged the purchase for talking pictures of *Smilin' Through, Tarzan, Back Street, State Fair, Call of the Wild, Peter Ibbetson, The Dark Angel.*

In regard to *State Fair*, one other member of the board, a native of Iowa, agreed. On the other stories all other members voted unfavorably. *Smilin' Through* and *The Dark Angel* were declared to be old-fashioned. *Back Street* was said to be "doubtful of popularity." *State Fair* was voted as "only interesting to farmers." *Tarzan* was asserted to be "too much hokum—beneath the dignity of the company." *Peter Ibbetson* was declared "too light and spiritual for present-day audiences." However, five of these subjects were later bought by other concerns and when produced entered the ranks of the biggest money-makers in recent years. The other two are now being filmed and should also be outstanding successes if capably produced.

Under the present synopsis-writing system of the studios, the author should select one of two extremes in writing his story.

1. He should write it short and pithy, injecting as much color, drama, and pace as he can in a few well-selected words. Try to give it sweep, punch, and reader interest without the waste of a single phrase. Hold it down to between 6,000 and 8,000 words. In this brief form (brief for a submitted script) the reader or scenario editor, if he is impressed by the story, will often turn it over to the story board in its original form and advise them to read it in that shape. In some studios they will persist in making a 2,000- or 3,000-word synopsis regardless, but many Hollywood authors prefer to gamble on this. There is the additional advantage that, even in the event that a synopsis is substituted for the author's story, the original work is still only in 6,000 or 8,000 words and stands far more chance of being read by the supervisors and higher executives if they should be attracted by the synopsis. Under this system of writing your story with brevity, the prime object is to endeavor to hurdle the reader synopsis; but the writer, in the case of some stories, may have to sacrifice so much in the telling that he would prefer to use more length. He should select the other extreme.

2. Write your story at full length, in complete detail and colorful description, regardless of how many words it consumes. Do not pad out or use excessive description, but tell the story in the manner which you believe will do it the most justice, building characters, situations, and atmosphere in a vital, well-rounded fashion without consideration as to the number of pages required. The aim under this system is to place your work at its very best, giving it obvious completeness, much thought, and "finish." It may be written as a detailed synopsis, in full-length novel form, as a three-act play, or as a working continuity.

There are certain advantages to this lengthy, detailed method. First, giving evidence of more time and thought in its preparation, it is usually regarded with more respect by the studios. Secondly, in rounding your work out fully, the staff reader sometimes gets the feel of the story and characters more definitely and writes a more comprehensive synopsis. Thirdly, if the story is accepted for purchase, the writer often receives a larger sum of money, the studios regarding a completely worked out story as of more value. This does not always apply, however.

Points against the lengthy method are: First, when a work is submitted in any length over 15,000 words, the chances are that—unless it is written by a noted author—not a single high executive, including the scenario editor himself, will read it until it has first caught his fancy by way of an attractive synopsis. Secondly, there is always the gamble—and it is more than a mere possibility—that the staff reader may make a poor and unrevealing synopsis of the work, thus almost totally eliminating its chances of gaining favorable notice from executives or the story board.

One way to overcome this might be for the author, after finishing his original work, to write his own synopsis in separate manuscript form and enclose it in the envelope when forwarding the complete work to the studio. This synopsis should be about 2,500 words, sufficient to get over some of the characterization, the touches, color, and backgrounds of the story, as well as the action, yet not so long that it will be difficult to read. If the synopsis is a well-written one, it may obviate the writing of a second synopsis by the staff reader, the author's own synopsis being copied and used by the studio for the appraisal of executives. By this additional effort the author has the chance of securing adequate representation for his story.

As far as the rules or demands of the studios are concerned, there is no set length at which a story must, or should, be submitted. Some original works are bought in 100,000 words, others have been purchased on eight or ten pages of paper. Occasionally we hear of a studio boasting that it just bought a story on one sheet of paper. Whenever this happens, however, you may be sure that it has been acquired from a well-known writer; also, that the author himself was on hand in the studio to give the producer a personal sales talk on the story's merits when the sale was achieved.

The lesser known writer who submits a story in less than 5,000 or 6,000 words has practically excluded all chance of selling his work. To begin with, the studios would not regard any original manuscript submitted in 3,000 or 4,000 words as entitled to be called a "story." They would not consider that enough labor or thought had been put into it. They would term it merely an "idea." As such, even if they liked it, the studios would either refrain from making a purchase or else offer the author a small sum for the idea. Published short stories in 3,000 or 4,000 words are sometimes bought, but once again this is due to the studio's respect for anything that has been successfully produced in another medium.

Rejection of a story does not necessarily mean that its possibilities have been permanently discarded. It may mean that the manuscript, temporarily, is not suited to the needs of the studio. A synopsis, with reader comments, editorial reports, etc., of the majority of submitted stories is filed away by most studios. These are usually indexed or catalogued for future reference.

A sea story, for instance, might be submitted at a time when the studio has recently purchased two or three marine yarns. Or else the executives may feel that there have been too many sea pictures that season and the vogue has waned. Under these conditions, the story is seldom bought, regardless of its merits.

A few months later, however, the studio may have need for a sea story to suit a particular star, or the popularity of aquatic films might have become reestablished. The studio will then go through its files and reconsider manuscripts previously rejected. Owing to the fact that some studios do not keep comprehensive files in connection with past submissions, it will pay the alert writer to resubmit a particularly good story at a later date should there be a return cinema vogue of that type of subject.

I have seen stories that hung around Hollywood for months, meeting rejection after rejection. No executive could see any value in them. Then suddenly some studio would score a hit with a picture along similar lines. A new movie cycle would start. Producers who formerly rejected these stories now hastily sent for them and in a competitive market willingly paid twice what they would have had to pay when the stories were first submitted to them.

An interesting example of this may be cited. A little over two years ago a young writer, because of forced economy, came to Hollywood by way of transcontinental autobus. On the way across the country he had such an interesting trip, he conceived the idea of a scenario in which the drama and action were laid on a bus and in the auto camps along the route.

He wrote the story. Notwithstanding the fact that it contained excellent movement and situations and was placed against a new and appealing background, every studio in Hollywood rejected it. "Too drab, not big enough," said the rejection comments. The general public would not be interested in a scenario played against such backgrounds, the studios felt.

Then, by chance, Columbia produced *It Happened One Night*, an extremely light story, laid almost exclusively in autobus and tourist-camp locales. *It Happened One Night* became one of the outstanding hits of recent years. Immediately other studios clamored to secure bus stories. The writer whose original story had been rejected now sold it for a fancy price. Five different studios were busy filming bus yarns within a few weeks.

Many stories are recalled in this manner, or sold after a second or third submission, if they are substantially of merit but not in line with the temporary trend of the studios. That is a valuable advantage of the writer having his stories handled by a reputable agent.

The agent, on the scene at Hollywood, keeps in personal contact with the demands of the studios and can submit a story on a moment's notice, and as many times as there is a call from the studio for that type of material. The agent angle is a highly important one for the writer. Additional comment on this topic will be found under the chapter, "Submitting the Script."

CHAPTER IX

What's in Demand?

THERE is no fixed or permanent demand by the studios in regard to story material. This applies as to quality, quantity, and types of subjects. Cinema conditions are so constantly fluctuating, both in relation to box-office results and the activities of the various studios themselves, that no really definite rules of a lasting nature can be set forth.

Over a period of three or four seasons, however, and sometimes longer, the studios do as a rule favor certain types of stories when a special so-called era has been established. Also, since its inception the cinema has found particular kinds of basic story material most generally successful, and has accordingly subconsciously adopted a policy of adhering rather closely to these special lines.

There is, on the other hand, a very definite story demand that springs up freshly every year, and sometimes at any month in the year, depending upon new developments and secondary shifts in popular trends. To these the writer should pay close attention. In fact, for any marked success in the cinema field, the astute writer will make a sharp study of time-to-time trends of the photoplay and give considerable attention at all seasons to the momentary demands of the studios. It is by following up this avenue of approach that the scenarist will not only sell more stories, but be apt to dispose of them promptly and at a good figure.

There is not only a continual shifting in story demands on the part of the industry as a whole, but individually the studios are almost daily adopting new story policies or facing new material needs because of the signing of additional stars, directors, and producers.

The type of story in demand at one studio may be a drug on the market elsewhere. Fiction writers have been trained to study the various magazines and publications in the field. The average screen writer, excepting those professionals resident in Hollywood, seems to believe that all studios buy the same kind of stories. To one viewing films in hit-or-miss fashion this may appear the case.

Writers, however, should observe the brand name on every film they view at the cinema and analyze the individual product of each studio. They should also note the stars, directors, and producers under contract to each company. A story has its best chance of sale if submitted in accordance with its adaptability to the requirements of these personalities.

At the present time there is a demand from all studios for human, heart-interest stories, intensified by a few situations of strong drama. This vogue started with the success of such films as *Little Miss Marker*, *Lady for a Day*, *State Fair*. It will continue for at least another two or three seasons.

Up until a few months ago the predominant demand in Hollywood was for sophisticated, or smart, ultramodern society stories. This cycle held sway for several years in all studios. It was only halted by a crusade for "cleaner" pictures launched by theatregoers, civic bodies, and churches throughout the country. Many producers thought that the elimination of the smart picture would cause a heavy loss in theatre attendance. *Little Women*, *It Happened One Night*, *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*, and similar films, however, quickly proved that the public was favorable to other types of subjects.

Today there is very little demand for sophisticated stories. They make up only a small percentage of the product now being turned out in Hollywood. In another year or two, however, there will probably be a return vogue on this sort of subject. For the present, the average writer will find a better market for other material.

The trend toward stark realism, which was marked by such films as *The Doorway to Hell, Five Star Final, Little Caesar*, etc., has also subsided temporarily. There will be few of these stories filmed for two or three seasons, unless they deal with some colorful character of another century.

Historical characters undoubtedly offer one of the best of present-day opportunities, both for the writer and for the producer. In the past, for some farfetched reason, producers have been rather timorous in making stories of a historical background. During the past few months, *King Henry VIII, Richelieu*, and *The House of Rothschild*, as well as others, have clearly shown that there is a splendid and almost virgin field in the picturization of historical characters. Most producers believe that this vogue will be of short duration. Personally, I feel that the historical trend has only just started, that it will last for several seasons.

Hollywood is gradually losing its unwarranted fear of costume pictures. There has long been a wealth of splendid stories that might be laid in bygone periods, but in the past no studio would buy them. Producers threw up their hands the moment they discovered that a story called for "costumes."

The truth of the matter is no film ever failed because it contained costumes. It failed, if at all, because it was a poor film. Half of the modern pictures turned out today are also flops at the box office. Are we to attribute their downfall to the fact that the characters wore *modern* clothes? This would be just as sensible as ascribing the financial loss of a period picture to its costumes. The public has no aversion to costume stories, provided they are well written, well directed, and well produced. The next season or two will conclusively bear witness to this. Writers need no longer have their previous hesitancy in writing costume stories or submitting them to the studios.

Notable cinema progress has been made in recent years in regard to the full-sided manner in which characters may be presented by writers. Gone is the old scenario dictum that all leading characters, the heroes and heroines, must be of spotless virtue, charming personality, and ironclad ethics. Today, screen characters may be shown to have their faults, imperfections, and even disagreeable sides to their natures.

These adverse angles must not be overdone, of course. They should be handled with care, fine deliberation, and, as a rule, with the balance definitely in favor of the character's better points. This latter development, however, may be left until the final reels of the picture, coming as sort of a "redemption," before the final fade-out. In recent months there have even been a few films which have disregarded this point. *The Informer* might be classed as a good example.

There has been little or no market for either light or farce comedies in feature length since the inception of the talkies. This used to be one of the best fields for original screen writers. The era of sound snuffed out virtually all the feature comedians. The studios have made almost no attempt to establish a new group of stellar comics.

Harold Lloyd is the sole survivor of the old school. The vehicles of such knockabout comedians as the four Marx brothers are not written, properly speaking; they are "cooked up" in the studio with the aid of a staff of "gag" men. The same may be said in connection with W. C. Fields, although here the writer has at least a slight chance of selling a story.

It would seem as though the studios are overlooking a fine opportunity in failing to give more consideration to feature laugh films of the light and farce comedy order. Occasionally a studio does select a story for some such players as Charles Ruggles or Zasu Pitts, but as a rule these players are assigned to provide comedy relief in productions featuring dramatic stars.

That most important story element, *hokum*, is coming back into its own again in Hollywood. By hokum, Hollywood means any story in which sentiment, heart throbs, loyalty, love of kin, self-sacrifice, or any of the more noble qualities are presented in a manner obviously intended to be inspiring. For a time the studios assumed a rather snobbish attitude toward the cinema. They attempted to place a taboo on hokum as beneath the dignity of the photoplay. They thought they had outgrown it. Events and the innate sentimentality of the general public were to persuade them differently.

Recently in the hopes of pacifying *hoi polloi*, the producers fed them a little hokum. The response from theatregoers in general was so great that Hollywood has lifted the ban altogether on hokum, provided it is presented with what is termed a "new or modern slant."

Such outstanding hits as *Lady for a Day*, *Little Miss Marker*, *Tarzan*, *It Happened One Night*, *Broadway Bill*, etc., were, after all, fundamentally hokum. To the surprise of many executives these pictures made more money than films of a far higher critical standard. Accordingly, hokum was recalled and will play a prominent part in future story selections for some time to come. This will provide an excellent opening for many writers.

Notwithstanding the present crusade against indecent pictures, there still is, and always will exist, a demand for sex stories. The ban placed upon the studios by the Hays organization does not order all sex stricken from the screen. It does mean, however, that sex dramas and problem plays must be handled with more delicacy, finesse, and good taste. Dialogue in particular must be held down to the bounds of polite society. The author who can write original sex stories for the screen and keep within these bounds, while yet revealing freshness and sparkle, still has one of the best and most profitable markets in the cinema field today.

Vogues in Hollywood run not only in relation to types of stories but also in reference to particular authors. When the work of a certain writer scores an outstanding box-office hit, the studios are very apt to draw one of two conclusions: (1) that the writer has special capabilities in the creation of stories suitable for the screen; (2) that the public taste has swung in the direction of that writer's viewpoints and subject matter.

In the early days of the cinema there were film vogues on the works of Rex Beach, Robert Chambers, Jack London, Fannie Hurst, Peter B. Kyne, Michael Arlen, and others. Later, especially with the arrival of dialogue, such writers as Ursula Parrot, Edna Ferber, Somerset Maugham, have gained even greater popularity with the studios. During the past year or so that brilliant and original writer, Damon Runyan, has been the man of the hour with the film producers.

Runyan, in fact, may be said to have revolutionized the type of story now most sought after in Hollywood. Runyan specializes in quaint, unusual, yet vital characters, clever twists and situations of the O. Henry style, and, last but not least, always sprinkles his subjects well with sentiment and intelligent hokum. For there is such a thing as intelligent hokum. The greatest scenarist and original screen writer the film industry has produced to date, Frances Marion, bases practically all of her stories on hokum of a high order.

Writers should pay special heed to these author vogues. They show in which direction the studios are headed and provide a target at which scenarists should shoot with their photoplay efforts.

Another policy pursued by some professional writers in Hollywood is the enterprising practice of keeping the eyes well trained on the latest ten best sellers in the book world and on the newest stage hits in the Broadway theatre. If a novel with a new background scores an immense hit, or a play registers an immediate popular success in New York, it may be taken for granted that the studios will enter competition for it.

Naturally, only one studio can buy it. Yet, if the novel or play is unusually distinctive, it is almost certain to start a new run of pictures of that type. The writer who is first in the field with a subject of the same appeal has a splendid chance of selling it if his material is of any merit. The writer, however, must use caution and good sense in following this policy. He should avoid any tendency to borrow or lift any of the original author's work. To do this is rankly unethical and borders on downright plagiarism.

What I am stressing is this: In the case of the success of such a play as *The Front Page,* it was a foregone conclusion that a cycle of newspaper stories would shortly begin. This occurred not only on the screen, but on the stage as well. In the instance of the popularity of *Men in White,* it was obvious that realistic dramas laid in a hospital would spring into demand. Sensing this immediately, the writer can endeavor to be in the van of this cycle without necessarily pilfering any of the original manuscript. *The White Parade* was not in any way a steal on *Men in White.* It treated the subject from a radically different angle. Yet the author sold this story to the cinema because it was presented to the studio promptly after the established success of *Men in White.* Hollywood considers this ethically fair.

All studios, of course, are supposed to be constantly on the lookout for stories which are distinctly new and different. This is true only in a very limited sense. The average studio religiously fights shy of anything that is really new or different. What they actually desire, despite announcements to the contrary, is tried and proved material. They prefer to let the other fellow take the gamble on novel or revolutionary subjects.

When studios say that they are searching for ideas that are fresh and off the beaten paths of film fiction, they mean stories which are fundamentally of the same fabric as those which they are accustomed to making, but which are woven with somewhat new character or plot threads. The writer who attempts to be too original or different, whatever the intrinsic merit of his stories, will find his efforts quickly rejected by the average studio.

Most producers are slow to venture upon untrodden story paths. Not only does this apply to any scenario which is distinct from anything heretofore produced upon the screen, but it holds in regard to a story which has the appeal and elements of a previous cycle which is not at the present moment in vogue. In other words, the average producer does not like to take chances; he wants to produce sure things. This is his privilege as a businessman.

Fortunately for writers, there are a few producers who are not only willing to blaze new trails, but are enterprising in their showmanship, quick to see the possibilities in novel stories that other producers overlook or ignore. Chief among such cinema pioneers might be cited Walter Wanger, Carl Laemmle, Jr., Darryl Zanuck, B. P. Schulberg, Charles R. Rogers, and Jesse Lasky. These men care neither for precedent nor for so-called established regulations. They are constantly experimenting. Some of the finest, as well as the most successful, of recent films have resulted from the progressive spirit of these executives.

When a professional writer in Hollywood has a story which is of marked originality, unusual content, or different plot or treatment, he usually takes it to Zanuck, Laemmle, Schulberg, Rogers, Wanger, or Lasky, knowing that here it will meet with the most favorable consideration. It is difficult for the out-of-town author to get his story to the personal attention of these producers, except through an agent.

As a general rule, however, I would not recommend that the writer devote his time to unusual stories of the pioneering type. The market for such material is of narrow scope.

Neither does it pay the writer to be too far ahead in relation to an oncoming trend. At first, trends develop rather slowly in the studios. Once again it is a case of the producers being unsure of themselves, not wishing to take a chance. Even after it has become quite apparent to many observers that the public has undergone a radical shift in cinema psychology, that certain new trends are definitely on the horizon, the average studio is often backward in perceiving or admitting it.

Therefore, the writer who senses that the public taste has undergone a change in relation to a certain type of story, should not rush forward with manuscripts of this nature. They will in all probability be rejected irrespective of their merit. He should wait until the moment when the studios have finally recognized the new vogue and are just starting under way with it. In other words, be in the lead when the boom begins, but don't get *ahead* of the studios. The exception to this is in the case of the more alert producers, some of whom I mentioned in a previous paragraph.

In keeping with this writing policy, what is termed the "timely story" offers year in and year out one of the very best of all markets for screen authors. It may be safely estimated that fully 50 per cent of the original stories sold by professional writers on the ground in Hollywood are prepared and disposed of on the basis of their being *timely* subjects. Expert scenarists in the free-lance field seldom attempt merely to write a good story. To do this would cut their sales to less than half. They read the daily press, watch national affairs, and endeavor to found their story on some event or new development which has attracted country-wide or international attention. It may be a murder case, a scandal, a celebrated marriage, a divorce, a political controversy, a social problem, or an underworld shake-up.

Events involving colorful or dramatic personalities make the best source for this sort of story. The writer, of course, must disguise his characters, twist and develop the story along new lines, and perhaps lay it in a totally different background. The studios have always been favorably disposed toward stories based on important happenings and celebrated cases. Not only does such a plot angle give the film additional interest and appeal, as well as timeliness, but productions of this nature have proved consistently strong attractions with the public.

Even in the instance of stories which have been originally conceived by writers without inspiration from any news source, I would urge that the writers somewhere incorporate in them an incident, situation, or locale that will give the producers a *selling angle.*

This failure to inject selling angles into stories is perhaps the outstanding difference between the untrained screen author and the professional studio writer. Many stories mediocre in plot have been sold because the expert writer has loaded his script with splendid selling angles. This is only another term for showmanship.

Writers should not make the false premise that showmanship is a matter for the publicity department or the theatre manager after the film has been completed. Today, showmanship begins with the preparation of the script. It is of the utmost importance that the writer learn how to manipulate his characters, situations, and backgrounds so that the studios immediately perceive good selling or exploitation angles in the story. The best means of achieving this is by juggling the locale, theme, or situations in such a matter that they feature something of current or historic importance. With the average story, writers should by all means develop this angle, even if it means a drastic rearrangement of the original plot outline.

It is an amazingly good story indeed that can be sold to the studios today merely on the basis of its plot alone. Stories of marked superiority in plot are rare even with the best of authors. The average writer is far wiser in including strong showmanship angles in his script. In journeying to the cinema, writers should study the various selling angles in the film as well as its situations and plot.

Many stories face a narrow sales market because their principal characters have been so conceived and handled as to limit the number of stars who might possibly portray them. This is particularly true in the case of the scenario which is largely built around one dominating character and is essentially a script of the stellar vehicle type. There is still a steady demand for stories lending themselves to the featuring of a single star such as Joan Crawford, Jimmy Cagney, Katharine Hepburn, or George Raft. But the writer is greatly handicapping the chances of a sale for the story when the outstanding character is created in a manner which restricts the playing of the leading role to only one or two well-known stars. Many excellent stories have been returned to their authors because they were built around a certain distinct personality, the studio which admired the manuscript being unable to find a star available who was suited to the part.

It is a far more practical plan to shape and delineate the principal story character in a fashion that will permit the role to be played by any one of several different stars falling into somewhat the same class group. Thus, if the story is rejected by one company, it has a possibility of acceptance at a number of other studios. There are some stories of course which revolve around a character so unique that there can be no altering or reshaping without spoiling the entire work. In such event the writer must simply risk the chance of selling the script as a vehicle for the one star for whom it is perfectly suited. I would advise most writers not to devote their time to this kind of screen vehicle. It does not pay in the long run.

Gradually, the all-star cast is gaining favor in the studios. This is a boom to screen authors. It allows complete freedom in the creation of characters and situations, permitting several strong roles instead of one outstanding part as called for by the single-star vehicle. Many stories of this nature may be sold today, where a few years ago the demand for multiple-star manuscripts was slight.

Despite the rise in popularity of the all-star film, it cannot be said that this sort of scenario has a better prospect of sale than the individual-star vehicle which is adaptable to the use of some particular box-office favorite at each of the different studios. In the first place, multiple-star stories, lacking restrictions, are easier to write; there are more of them on the market. Secondly, one of the big problems of the producers is in finding suitable, attractive vehicles for their leading stars. There is always a shortage of this sort of material. Therefore, the worthy, well-written individual-star vehicle has an equal, if not better, opportunity of being sold than the all-star type; also it is apt to bring a better price.

Many writers are still concerned about the most salable ending for the story—whether the studios insist upon a happy fade-out. This is another early ruling that has fallen by the wayside in the march of the cinema. While producers prefer a pleasant finale to the story, they no longer demand that every story have the typical, routine happy ending of former screen days.

The writer should endeavor truthfully to work out the destinies of his characters and bring the story to its logical conclusion, regardless of whether it is happy or unhappy. It has a far better likelihood of impressing the scenario executives if the writing is sincere and accurate than if an artificial ending is tagged on. If the studio is favorably disposed toward the story as a whole and desires a more pleasant fade-out, a staff writer is generally assigned to remedy this. In some instances the original author is requested to do so before final purchase of the script is effected.

As for the forms of manuscripts most salable to the studios, the original story in fiction or synopsis form predominates. A few adaptations of famous or modern works are bought, but they are in the minority. Occasionally a story in full working continuity is purchased, but not often. When the writer does succeed in selling a free-lance continuity, however, he usually is paid a high price for his work, and in addition is quite apt to receive an offer to join the studio as a contract writer. The great majority of continuities are prepared in the studio, after purchase of the original story. There is a steady demand and need at all times, however, for gifted, creative continuity writers.

CHAPTER X

Faults to Avoid

MOST story sales are lost for the simple reason that the manuscript is amateurishly constructed or poorly written. It is obviously an inexpert job, revealing no knowledge or consideration for the entertainment demands of the cinema, and quite devoid of the perfections and elements of appeal required by the studios.

The writer who expects to sell this sort of script to get some easy movie money is wasting his time. He should first make a detailed study of the cinema and engage in considerable preliminary and experimental writing before attempting to submit stories to film producers.

Granting that the writer has passed through the elementary stages of screen writing, and that his scripts are well written and manifest a fair knowledge of scenario construction, then here are some of the chief reasons why the average script meets with rejection:

1. *Insufficient Plot.* As outlined in a previous chapter, the studios today demand more plot complications than formerly. Technique has speeded up and more ground is covered in a talking picture, in relation to situations if not movement. Some studios, perhaps, are overdoing this, but the fact remains that the majority of producers now look for at least five or six strong situations in each story. Bear in mind this means *dramatic situations,* not mere incidents. Do not confuse the two. A situation must have conflict and suspense. Without several of these your story is apt to be

considered too light or weak. The average script submitted today is, from the producer's standpoint, lacking in this respect.

2. *Lacking in Novelty.* The manuscript is too similar to other stories which have been recently produced. This does not mean that if there is a current vogue on underworld or South Sea Island pictures that a writer cannot sell stories of the same background. But he must create some new or different slant in his plot or treatment. The script must not be similar to others in characters and plot as well as background. Sometimes this happens on the screen, but most producers prefer to avoid it.

3. *Too Fantastic or Bizarre.* Many stories of this nature are submitted but they are only seldom purchased by the studios. Undoubtedly, the screen as a form is well suited to this sort of material, but to date some film producers feel that the public as a whole is not receptive to them. Rider Haggard's *She* was recently filmed, however, and Universal has had good success with Boris Karloff in such subjects. Perhaps in a year or two there will be a better market for this material. No objection is made if only individual incidents or situations are fantastic.

4. *Story Lacks a Strong Climax.* This is a most common fault with many scripts. The writer should by all means endeavor to have a heavy punch situation in the last reel of his story. Without it a script has very slight chance of sale. This is the most vital point in a film as far as success with audiences is concerned. An important crisis must develop, followed by a dramatic "wallop," calling in even the elements, rain, hurricanes, fires, explosions, or the navy if necessary. Critical observers may laugh at these, but they're still good for the box office.

5. *Locale Too Drab.* Producers favor stories laid in pictorial, colorful, or dramatic settings. If you have a good plot, lay it against backgrounds which are attractive or at least of compelling scenic interest. If the theme and characters do not permit this, then write certain sequences into

the plot that will occur in some other locale, thus breaking up the monotony and giving a diversity of optical appeal. Also, endeavor to get the most out of the background. If, for instance, the action takes place on a farm, make it, if possible, a farm engaged in activity of a pictorial nature. If the subject requires the presentation of the drabness of farm life, then the device will have to be resorted to of introducing a carnival, circus, or fair somewhere in the action. This was effectively done in *State Fair.* Occasionally the producers will waive the "too drab" rule. Generally, however, they adhere to it. All the suggestions in this chapter are given, not on the basis of ironclad regulations, but as the attitude of the majority of producers.

6. *Principal Characters Lack Power, Glamour, or Individuality.* Here we have somewhat the same angle applying to characters that was noted in connection with locales in the preceding paragraph. Regardless of the background, the leading characters should have vitality, color, or personality. Almost as many stories are sold by virtue of interesting, compelling characters as by the value of the plot itself. The public is interested in outstanding personalities, whether it be a newspaper columnist, a statesman, or a character in a photoplay. Producers endeavor to cater to this curiosity. Regardless of how humble or lowly the leading character may be, give the role definite traits of individuality and unusual interest. Strong characters usually make strong plots.

7. *Too Psychological.* Here is another marked fault found in numbers of scripts. Avoid situations and stories which rely too much upon the minute mental processes and reactions of the characters. A little of this, of course, should be involved in every good story situation, but physical action is the chief requirement of the box-office film sought by studios. The psychological story belongs more to the realm of literature, where the author can by the use of words go to any lengths in explaining the exact mental processes of a character in any situation. If your main situations are

concerned with what a character *thinks* about a certain plot development, rather than what he does or says about it, then they are weak and faulty from a cinema viewpoint. The better photoplay, in fact, will concern itself more with what he *does* about things rather than what he *says* about them, the latter process having a tendency to slow up a film and make it too talky.

8. *Not in Keeping with Current Cinema Trends.* As explained in Chap. IV, writers should concentrate on stories in line with up-to-the-minute film vogues. Be a trifle ahead of the studios, if you will, but never behind them. Nothing is so unsalable as a story that belongs to a passing or discarded cycle. When the studies decide to abandon, if only for a time, gangster, bedroom, or political stories it is almost hopeless to submit stories of this nature to them. Many writers continue to do so, however. If you have a plot idea dealing with an off-trend subject, file it away and wait until the vogue shows evidence of returning.

9. *Too Censorable or Frank in Its Treatment of Sex.* Even when the ultramodern sophisticated film was in its heyday on the screen, there were limits to which the studios could go. Today, the restrictions are even greater, and will continue so for a few seasons. The censorship ban also causes rejection on stories which are too gruesome or horror provoking, or which feature unsavory characters; also all subjects which hold public officials, public bodies, or officers of the law up to public scorn and ridicule.

10. *Lacking in Mass Appeal.* Sometimes the story deals with characters or a theme held to be not of general popular interest. Under this heading fall all subjects which, while they may be of interest to the author himself or some particular group or class, are not considered likely to appeal to the mass of theatregoers as a whole. A writer, for instance, might personally find archaeology, natural history, a social problem, or a national political question of intense interest, but if the subject cannot be treated and fictionized in such a manner as to make it primarily plot entertainment in the

accustomed cinema sense, regardless of the question involved, then it is not deemed good photoplay material. Neither do the studios want outright problem plays, no matter how interested the general public may be in the topic when it is outside the theatre. In this category fall capital versus labor questions, religious sect topics, race problems, etc. These have very small chance of sale. The studios contend that amusement and diversion are the chief desires of the theatregoer when he goes to the cinema; all other elements must be secondary, if present at all.

11. *It Is Lacking in Showmanship or Selling Angles.* The sales department in the New York distribution offices of each company has a great deal to do in dominating the story policies of every studio. The extent of this is far wider than the average writer realizes. Nightly contact is made with the New York office by means of telephone and ticker tape, so that the studio can get the latest reports and advice on sales angles in films. Producers seek to embody strong exploitation angles in every production. Stories devoid of such possibilities are seldom purchased. Additional comment on the selling angle is given in another chapter.

12. *It Is Anticlimactic.* In studio terminology this means that after the plot has been brought to a certain climax, the big situation in the script, too many other things of lesser importance happen before the film can be brought to a final fade-out. This is faulty technique. Plots should be so arranged that after the main climax has been reached, the balance of the story, or denouement, can be speedily covered in a few feet of film and the photoplay brought to a close. Anticlimax is a common fault not only among expert scenarists, but among novelists newly attempting to write for the screen.

13. *The Story Has a Tendency to Let Down,* rather than build up, as it progresses. Although found in some films as well as submitted scripts, this is a serious error in story construction. It is fatal to the success of a picture. The dramatic interest in a story should start at the beginning of

the plot and rise gradually with an increasing suspense that keeps building, building, building up to the chief punch situation and climax at the very end of the film. Don't start your story off too strongly, in either pace or dramatic thunder, unless you have situations which, in action and suspense, can exceed these opening scenes as the script proceeds. The further the plot progresses the more powerful must become the situations. This caution should also be observed in regard to the middle of the story. Here the script should be stronger than the early portion, but lesser in dramatic force than the latter half. No situation should be placed in the center of a scenario that cannot be "topped" in drama or thrill by the last-reel climax. If your script is lacking in this all-important crescendo, then you haven't a good screen story.

CHAPTER XI

Dictionary of Studio Terms

Action: The movement and business in any scene; also the series of incidents and events which make up the photoplay; the unfoldment of the story.

Adaptation: The screen version of a stage play, short story, or novel; often calling for drastic changes in the original work.

Ad-lib: To improvise lines on the spur of the moment.

All-star Story: A manuscript which features several outstanding characters instead of centering the interest on one or two leading roles.

Angle Shot: A scene with the camera placed in some unusual, or side, position, instead of shooting straight on at the players.

Anticlimax: A secondary situation or climax which follows the main climax, delaying the end of the story. This is a weakness that should be avoided.

Atmosphere: Any object, article, or local character placed in a scene to make it more realistic or colorful.

Audience Picture: A film that appeals to the majority of theatregoers, regardless of its critical merit.

Banks: Banklights; large studio lights arranged in groups.

Baby Spot: A small spotlight.

Belly Laugh: Any incident or speech which provokes a hearty guffaw from the audience.

Blimp: The box or covering that is placed over a studio camera to muffle the sound.

Blue Gag: A gag or incident of questionable taste.

B.O.: Abbreviation for box office.

Box-office Story: A story aimed primarily at the general public; one calculated to score at the box office.

Breakaway: Any table, chair, bottle, or other prop which has been specially made so that it will fall apart easily without injuring a player in a fight or accident scene.

Brief Synopsis: The outline of the story told in the fewest possible words.

Broad: A large spotlight that stands on the studio floor.

Bullfrog: An actor with a deep voice.

Business: Definite bits of action, small incidents, or mannerisms invented to create effective scenes or build characters.

Camera-Hog: A player who endeavors to keep his face in front of the camera without regard for others in the scene.

Camera-Wise: One who knows how to get the best use out of the camera.

Catwalk: The narrow runway at the top of all studio sets, on which the spotlight electricians operate.

Cello: An actress with a deep voice.

Characterization: The means and method of delineating the distinct individuality of a character in the story.

Chemical Dissolve: Dissolving, or fading out, the end of a scene by means of laboratory chemicals instead of by use of the regular camera device. With the aid of chemical dissolves a scene, after being shot, can later be faded out at any place desired.

Cinderella Story: The term applied to a story the formula of which deals with a poor or obscure girl who eventually wins love, wealth, and happiness.

Cinematographer: The cameraman.

Climax: The big moment in the story, when all previous incidents and events culminate in a final "showdown" situation; the apex of the plot, the pinnacle of the upward movement in the action. The climax should come in the last reel of the picture, shortly before the final fade-out.

Close Shot: A scene taken with the camera in proximity to the action, but not so near as in the close-up, and differing from the latter in that the term has a relative meaning. It signifies no exact distance, but calls for the director to move up with the camera. In regard to a small set, or one player, the camera might be set at 6 ft.; in regard to a larger scene or a group of several players the camera distance might be 15 ft.

Close-up: A scene taken with the camera very close to the action or object. In general this refers to a scene showing only the head and shoulders of a player; not used as often as formerly.

Color: A term used to indicate that a story or film has plenty of local color, atmosphere, glamour, or appeal of background and locale; also used in reference to characters.

Complication: A plot twist or situation which confronts the characters in the story with additional problems or involves them in a new predicament.

Conflict: The mental, emotional, or physical clash of two or more characters in the story; a struggle for mastery or victory. One of the most vital and effective elements of the photoplay.

Continuity: The complete scenario with all scenes and dialogue in exact order, just as they will appear in the finished film.

Continuity Writer: A skilled scenarist who specializes in the writing of continuities. Some are under contract to certain producers, others free-lance among the studios.

Continuous Action: A situation or sequence in which the action goes straight through without interruption or cutting away to any other characters or part of the story. In the silent drama cutbacks and cutaways were often resorted to in technique. Today, continuous action is the most approved method in the treatment of the average sequence.

Costume Picture: A photoplay in which the characters wear clothes of any period other than the present.

Costume Plot: A list of the various items of clothing, jewelry, etc., worn by the players in all scenes. Also called a wardrobe plot.

Crane Shot: A spectacular moving scene made by means of a large mechanical crane with a long arm, on which the camera is mounted. The arm of the crane swings high above the set, or from side to side, with great swiftness.

Credit Titles: The titles at the beginning of a photoplay, on which are given the names of the players, the scenarists, director, producer, etc. It is the custom today to combine action or art effects in the background of these titles, the scenarist often offering certain suggestions in his continuity.

Cross Fire: Rapid dialogue, banter, or gag lines between two players or characters.

Cross-lens Action: Movement from left to right, or right to left, across the motion-picture scene.

Cutback: Returning to a certain scene or character, after having interpolated action dealing with another character or object.

Cut-in: A shot of any object which is inserted into the action of the scene, such as a telegram, press clipping, factory whistle; also called an Insert.

Cutter: A film cutter or editor. One who cuts and assembles the film after it is shot.

Cutting Script: The script used by the film editor in assembling the scenes. This script contains notations of any changes in action or dialogue made in the studio or on location, after production of the photoplay started. Also called the Editing Script.

Daily Rushes: Photographed scenes which arrive from the laboratory each day and are examined by the production staff for quality, and to ascertain if any retakes may be necessary. Also called Rushes; Dailies.

Dark Stage: An enclosed stage on which scenes are photographed by artificial light.

Day Scene: Any scene in which the action occurs during daytime.

Detailed Synopsis: A synopsis in which the story is told in full length and detail, getting over mood, feeling, and characterization, as well as action.

Dissolve: The process of melting or fading the ending of a scene so that it gradually disappears or blends into another scene.

Distribution: The physical means of handling and distributing the completed films, transporting them from studio to theatre.

Distributor: The firm or organization which takes over the physical distribution of the films, through various exchanges, or branch offices.

Dolly: A camera truck upon which cameras are set in order to make a moving shot.

Double: A minor player who impersonates one of the leading performers in dangerous or tiresome scenes.

Double Exposure: A composite scene in which two different exposures have been made on the same negative. A triple exposure is made in a similar manner.

Double Printing: Sometimes resorted to in place of double exposure. By this process a composite scene is made by printing two negatives on the same strip of film.

Dramatic Triad: A union of three characters, or groups of characters, closely related in the action of a story.

Dream Picture: A photoplay, usually of a fantastic or improbable nature, the action of which is finally revealed as having been a dream. This type of film, once popular, is seldom made today.

Dummy: A stuffed figure substituted for one of the players when the action calls for dangerous risk.

Dupe: A studio term meaning a "duplicate" positive print or negative.

Episode: A series of connected scenes which are supposed to make up an event of importance in the story.

Episodic: Said of a story when its events or dramatic situations, while perhaps interesting in themselves, are not related or unified with each other in such a manner as to develop a sustained and increasing suspense.

Establish: To make plain; to show clearly any important trait or fact concerning a character, place, or thing.

Event: A happening of more or less significance, but not so important as a Situation.

Exit: For a character to leave a scene.

Explanatory Title: A subtitle inserted to cover something which is not made sufficiently clear in action. Such titles are still used in talking pictures, but only occasionally.

Exposition: Explanation of what is to follow, laying the groundwork for the story; setting forth of certain facts.

Exterior: Any scene in which the action takes place out of doors.

Extravaganza: A photoplay in which an appeal is made more upon its lavishness and fancy than upon its realism or accuracy.

Fade-in: The gradual appearance of a scene upon the screen, intended to correspond somewhat to the rising of the curtain in the theatre.

Fade-out: The gradual melting, or disappearance, of a scene.

Faking: A legitimate artifice to make the unreal appear real; scenic, mechanical, camera, and laboratory devices used to create amazing or realistic effects.

Feature Film: Generally speaking, any film that is five reels or more in length.

Feminine Angle: Getting an appeal to the women into the story.

Filler: A short film of any nature used to fill or round out a theatre program.

Film Editor: See Cutter.

Flash: A very brief scene, usually only two or three feet in length.

Flash Back: A brief form of cutback.

Flop: A failure, especially in regard to profits or box-office results.

Footage: Film length as measured in feet. There are 1,000 feet of film to a standard reel.

Full Shot: A camera shot which takes in all characters in a scene, regardless of number, as in contrast to a Two-shot or Three-shot.

Gaffer: The chief electrician on a studio set.

Gag Man: One who specializes in providing wit, humor, and comedy bits for a film or comic star. Some are writers, others verbal in their contributions.

Glass Shot: A trick process by means of which backgrounds are incorporated into settings by shooting through painted glass.

Grip: A studio stagehand.

Heart Interest: This term is never used in reference to the romantic appeal of a story, but to those elements of a sentimental nature which win the warm, close sympathies of the audience.

Heavy: A villain. Formerly it was the custom to have only one heavy in a photoplay; today as many as three or four are used, some dying or passing out of the film in its early reels, to be replaced by others.

Heavy Lead: So-called when the leading character is also of villainous traits.

Hokum: As now employed this term has a wide meaning, sometimes being used with favor, at other times disparagingly. In general it means anything that is familiar or "old stuff."

Horse Opera: A Western story or film.

Human Interest: Story elements which are so close to the hearts of all classes of people as to make them of universal appeal.

Incident: A happening usually of lesser importance, but contributing to the construction of a character, or the plot as a whole. There need be no conflict in an incident.

Indies: The independent producers.

Inkies: Studio lamps with incandescent lights in place of carbons.

Insert: A more modern term for Cut-in.

Interior: Any scene in which the action occurs indoors.

Introductory Title: A caption used to introduce a character. Such subtitles are still used occasionally.

Iris: A camera device which opens and closes in a circle, thus enabling the scene to be brought in slowly from a pinpoint until it covers the screen. The scene at all times is sharp and clear, as differing from a fade shot. Thus the expressions, Iris in, and Iris out.

Iris and Fade: A combination of both devices, in which the scene opens or narrows in a circle, at the same time fading in or out, as the case may be.

Iris Down: To narrow down the circle of the iris on some particular object, so as to call particular attention to it.

Juicer: A studio electrician.

Jump Title: A subtitle inserted in a scene to cover some disparity or jump in the action; now rarely, if ever, used, due to technique of the talking picture.

Key Cities: The large cities in various parts of the country which dominate their districts.

Lab: The film laboratory.

Lap Dissolve: The dissolving, or melting, of the end of one scene over the beginning of another; see Dissolve and Wipe.

Lapse: A break of time in the story during which none of the intervening action is shown; a time lapse.

Legit: The legitimate theatre, the footlight drama.

Let 'Em Roll: This is the call now given to start the cameras, replacing the old command, "Camera!"

Local Color: Small incidents, bits of life, character touches, etc., which give an air of realism to the locale of the scenes.

Locale: The locality, scenic backgrounds, and environment in which the action of the story takes place.

Location: Any place or setting away from the studio where scenes are made.

Location List: A detailed list of all locations to be used in a production. The location staff draws up this list.

Long Shot: This term covers a wide range, anywhere from a full-length view of the characters to a distant shot. It generally signifies a full view of the set or setting, whatever its size, and is qualified by other scenario terms such as medium long shot, etc.

Lot: The studio grounds as a whole.

Main Title: The name of the photoplay; also, the first title at the beginning of the film which tells the name of the picture, by whom produced, etc.

Medium Shot: Halfway between a long shot and a close shot, the exact distance depending upon the size of the set. That which is a medium shot in a big set might be equivalent in distance to a long shot in a small set.

Medium Close-up: A scene which cuts off the player, or players, a little above the knees.

Medium Long Shot: Another relative term, meaning halfway between what has been established as the long shot and the close shot in this particular scene.

Melodrama: Heavy drama, replete with thrills and excitement.

Mental Punch: The dramatic angle or theme of the story which is calculated to impress the mental faculties and sympathies of the audience.

Milk the Audience: Utilizing every trick to play on the audience's emotions.

Miniature: Small models of boats, buildings, cities, or other scenery, which are shot at close range in a manner that makes them appear full size.

Mixer: The man who controls the sound apparatus in the making of a scene.

Mob Stuff: Scenes calling for large crowds of extras.

Motivate: To supply a logical or convincing reason for the act or attitude of a character. This is a much used term in the studios. Motivation for characters is demanded at all times.

Moving Shot: Any scene in which the camera moves with the action; usually it refers to a truck shot.

Multiple-star: A photoplay containing good parts for the featuring of several stars, same as all-star.

Narrative: Story material which is more descriptive than dramatic.

Out of Sink: Slang term used when the sound and action of a scene are not in synchronization.

Pan: 1. Short for panorama, or a sweeping of the camera slowly from side to side or up and down. 2. Short for panchromatic, a type of negative film stock which has a wide range of color sensitivity.

Parallel Action: Action that takes place simultaneously, but in two or more different locations.

Physical Punch: Scenes or situations dominated by forceful physical action.

Plant: To establish something in the early action of the story so that it can be referred to later in the picture.

Playback: After a scene is made the sound recorded is played back at once so that the director and players will know if the scene is "O.K. for sound."

Plot Outline: A short synopsis of the story giving merely the important action without minor details.

Premise: The basis, or opening of the story, in which certain facts regarding the leading characters are assumed, and later to be proved or revealed in detail.

Preview: A showing of a photoplay before general release of the film.

Process Shot: A composite scene which is made by any trick film process. There are many methods, most of which are used to inject foreign or moving backgrounds into a scene that is shot in the studio.

Program Picture: An ordinary photoplay of the routine type, to which the producer gives no special attention, and upon which is usually made a minimum financial outlay.

Props: Short for properties, or the various articles, paraphernalia, and odds and ends used in the making of a photoplay.

Property Plot: The detailed list of props that will be needed in the filming of the story. The property man draws up this list.

Protagonist: The leading or central character in the story.

Punch: A situation of great dramatic force. Most producers prefer a physical punch to a mental punch in their stories; although the writer should endeavor to include both in his script.

Quickie: A cheap film, made quickly.

Reaction: The effect produced upon a character by a certain situation, or by the words and actions of another character; what the character does as a result of these events.

Recoil: The boomerang of events, or the turning of conditions against the one who put them in motion.

Register: To indicate, to make manifest.

Release Title: The title under which a photoplay is presented to the public, whether or not it was the name attached to the original work.

Releasing Organization: Same as Distributor.

Relief: A humorous or comedy scene interpolated in the action to break the tension, usually after an unusually sad, exciting, or dramatic situation.

Retake: A scene which has been refilmed, owing to some fault or error.

Retrospect: A scene or sequence which fades back and shows something which happened in the past.

Road Show: A production of such importance or magnitude that it is booked into special theatres for long runs, instead of playing the regular cinema houses.

Running Shot: Another term for a moving shot, in which the camera is moved along the set on a truck.

Rushes: Same as Daily Rushes.

S.A.: Sex appeal.

Scenario: In the studios this term covers a wide scope and is loosely used, meaning anything from an original story to a continuity.

Scenarist: A screen writer, regardless of the type of work he does; a photoplaywright.

Scene: A piece of action in a photoplay that is taken without stopping the camera.

Scene Plot: The detailed list of scenes, arranged and grouped together in accordance with their relation to certain sets and locations. This list is made by the production department.

Screamer: A thrill story of the murder-mystery type.

Script: Short for manuscript. A term loosely used and applied to either an original story, an adaptation, or a continuity.

Sequence: A connected series of scenes or incidents which are so closely related that they logically follow one upon the other without a break in either time or movement in the story.

Shocker: A horror story; a weird or terrifying photoplay.

Shoot: To film; to photograph.

Shooting Script: The final complete continuity that is turned over to the director, from which he makes the photoplay.

Shot: Studio parlance for a scene which has been filmed, or is to be filmed.

Sink: To synchronize the sound and action of a scene.

Situation: A development in the plot which brings about a clash, struggle, or predicament between any of the characters or creates an obstacle to be overcome. The basis of an effective photoplay situation is action and movement, not thought or dialogue.

Slapstick: Extremely broad or exaggerated comedy.

Sob Stuff: Incidents or situations calculated to affect the sympathetic emotions of the audience.

Spin 'Em: Same as Let 'Em Roll.

Split-stage: A device used in the making of double exposures or dual-role scenes.

Spot Continuity: A skeletonized outline of the scenario presenting the high spots of the story.

Star Vehicle: A story built around one outstanding character, calling for a single featured star in the billing. Also called a Starring Vehicle.

Stock Shot: Scenes of various places and objects and events which are kept on hand by film libraries and inserted into pictures when needed.

Straight Role: A role lacking in characterization; played by the actor in his natural manner.

Superimpose: Photographing or printing one scene on top of the other.

Surprise Ending: A clever or unusual twist at the end of a story which is unexpected by the audience.

Suspense: The plot element which keeps the audience in doubt or in a state of anxiety as to the outcome of a particular situation, or to the story as a whole.

Take: Studio parlance for a scene that has been photographed. Each take is numbered, several being made of each scene.

Tank Stuff: Water or sea scenes which are made with the aid of large tanks or pools located on the studio grounds. Miniature sea stuff is often made in these tanks.

Three-shot: A close-up or medium shot of three characters, in order to emphasize a scene between them.

Time Lapse: A break of time in the story during which none of the intervening action is shown.

Tonsil Tryout: Taking a voice test in the studio.

Treatment: A suggested outline or a particular manner or angle in which a screen story may be written. Sometimes two or three treatments of one story are written, each writer having his own conception of how the story should be treated for the best screen results. The producer then selects the one he feels to be superior. Fundamentally, an adaptation may be said to be a treatment.

Truck Back: To move the camera back and away from the action as the scene is being filmed. This is done by means of a truck or dolly.

Truck Up: To move the camera closer to the action as the scene is being filmed.

Two-shot: A close-up or medium shot of two characters, in order to emphasize a scene between them.

Visualization: The ability to think in terms of pictures or action; to form visual images of scenes and stories as they will appear when produced. One of the rarest but most important abilities among scenarists and producers.

Wipe: A modern screen device used to replace certain dissolves and lap dissolves in the continuity. They are made in all sorts of trick shapes and manners and gain their name from the fact that often it appears as though the scene has been wiped off the screen.

Wire Stuff: Trick scenes and perilous stunts done with the aid of invisible wires.

Working Script: Same as Shooting Script. The continuity used by the director when actual production of the story is under way.

Working Title: The temporary title under which a film is sometimes made, to be changed before final release of the film.

CHAPTER XII

Selecting the Title

THE chief objective of the average picture is to draw money to the box office. In deciding upon the main title for your story, this should be your aim, to give it a name that will create immediate interest, incite curiosity.

All manner of rules have been laid down as to the best sort of box-office title. None of these regulations are strictly adhered to by the film industry. Many of them have been repeatedly broken with success.

Generally speaking, however, the writer should strive for three things: brevity, novelty, and color. The producers incline toward short titles whenever one can be found with fitness and force. One-word and two-word titles are particularly favored because they get the appeal over quickly, are better handled in the publicity, posters, and electric lights. Nevertheless, a superior title of public drawing power should not be sacrificed simply because it requires a couple of extra words.

Many long titles have been used with profitable results, as for example: *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang, Death Takes a Holiday, Lives of a Bengal Lancer, Transatlantic Merry-go-round, The Bride of Frankenstein, The Barretts of Wimpole Street, Eight Girls in a Boat, Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch,* etc. It will be noted that usually these are retained from some well-known novel or play. It is more advisable to use a name of fewer words.

Avoid triteness and stock expressions such as *Playthings* *of Fate, Her Great Sacrifice, Love Conquers All.* Try to get over some dramatic theme, situation, or background of the story, or else concentrate on some appealing angle concerning the leading character. The following titles, used by various studios, may be considered of good audience interest and exploitation value, regardless of whether or not they were well-known works: *Dancing Lady, Platinum Blonde, The Invisible Man, Broadway Bill, College Rhythm, Four Hours to Kill, The Gay Divorcee, Lady For a Day, Diamond Jim, G Men, Red-headed Woman, The Cohens and Kellys, Men in White, The Thundering Herd, I'm No Angel, Broadway Thru a Keyhole, Bring 'Em Back Alive, Bad Girl, Mutiny on the Bounty.*

However, speaking candidly, the screen writer himself need not be greatly concerned over the title of his story. An eye-catching name will help a bit in drawing attention to the script at first sight, but that is about as far as it goes. The problem of securing and deciding upon a good title rests largely with the studio after the story has been purchased and the film placed in production.

Even the opinion of the New York sales force of the company often plays a large part in the final decision. No matter how much time and trouble a writer takes in trying to unearth an attractive name for his work, it is quite apt to be changed by the time the film is completed. This happens even with well-known published works. The studios usually have their own good reasons for this, which need not be entered into here.

No matter how good your title is, it will not sell an inferior story. No matter how poor the title is, it will not deter the studio from buying your story if it is favorably regarded. Once the editorial staff has turned the first page of your manuscript, the title means little or nothing. Your work must stand on its own merits.

I am not suggesting that the writer slap on any old title that pops into his mind. This shows slovenliness, inexpertness, and a lack of creative ability. The title is a part of the writer's work and he is expected to bend every effort in supplying a good title; but because he has heard of the great importance placed upon titles by film producers, the writer should not gain the impression that the title he selects will deeply affect the sale of the story one way or the other.

The studios are not worried about titles on the scripts which they purchase, but about those on films when they are ready for release. However, if they can secure an excellent title from the original author they appreciate both his aid and his ability.

CHAPTER XIII

Submitting and Marketing the Script

BEFORE submitting a story of any type, the writer should first be certain that it is professional in preparation and appearance. Whatever his talents as an author, the writer is expected to be at least experienced in the proper formalities of script presentation. Otherwise his story will not even be given consideration.

Either 16 or 20 pound white paper should be used, 20 pound stock preferably, because it will stand more handling.

The 8½ by 11 size is mostly used for original stories or adaptations in synopsis or fiction form. In regard to continuities, studios differ, some using the 8½ by 11 size, others 8½ by 13. The free-lance writer may select whichever he prefers.

All manuscripts must be typewritten. No others are considered, regardless of how legible the handwriting may be. Printed stories, of course, may also be submitted.

The first page of the manuscript should contain nothing but the author's name and address, placed in the upper right- or left-hand corner, and in the center of the page the title of the story, with a "By Joseph Brown" placed beneath this.

Some authors devote the second page to a cast of characters, but this is not necessary. Other scenarists often use the second page for a foreword or note explaining some feature of the story. Where this is not vital, most writers dive right into the telling of the story on the second page, after once again writing the main title at the top of the sheet.

Double spacing is used on the typewriter for all original stories and adaptations, or treatments. Single spacing is used in continuities.

Each page should be numbered in the center or in the right-hand corner. Be sure to leave plenty of white margin on both sides of the paper.

Upon completion of the manuscript the pages should be gathered together and fastened inside a heavy paper, or cardboard manuscript folder, which can be purchased at any stationery store. The title of the story and the author's credit by-line should be placed in the center of this outside front cover. Use brass or metal fasteners of the punch-hole variety, not twine or ribbon.

It is advisable to make a carbon copy of all stories, as a protection against loss in the mails. Professional writers make four or five strong carbon copies of their screen stories and submit one copy simultaneously to each of several studios. While this is not generally considered ethical in the fiction and magazine field, it is a common and approved practice in the film industry. Studios will offer no objection to it. As for the writer, it greatly speeds up his possibility of sale, eliminating the delay in sending the story to one studio at a time, with the consequent waiting and delay before it is submitted to another concern. While it entails a little more work and expense for the author, it is sometimes a good policy to pursue. Be sure that the carbon copies are clear, dark, and distinct, however. Send no dirty, dim, or blurred typing.

All scripts should be mailed flat without folding, in large full-sized heavy envelopes, with another self-addressed and stamped envelope enclosed for return. For safety's sake most authors send their manuscripts by registered mail, although this is not necessary.

Fixing the amount to be paid for the story should be left entirely to the studio, at least as far as opening the negotiations are concerned. Average prices paid for stories, as well as screen writers' salaries, are fully covered in another chapter.

No definite information can be given as to the length of time a story will be held by a studio before it is returned or purchased. Some studios retain a story for many days before final action upon it. This is especially true if the story is at all favorably regarded. From ten days to two weeks is not unusual even in the case of a poorly rated story.

In marketing manuscripts, one point cannot be stressed too strongly. Every writer, if possible, should endeavor to sell his screen efforts through a reputable story agent. This applies to established authors as well as lesser known writers. While authors of national prominence, and those with whom the studios have had previous dealings, may successfully deal directly with the scenario departments or producers, the average writer will find it far more profitable and effective to submit through an agent.

To begin with, if you are a lesser known writer, unfamiliar to the studios, there is quite a chance that they will not even accept your manuscript for consideration, but will return it to you unread. This is because of two reasons:

1. The studios have very little confidence in the cinema efforts of unknown writers. From past experience they have learned that seldom if ever do they find a worth-while script from among manuscripts submitted in this way. Studios regard it as largely a waste of time to read them.
2. Most of the plagiarism suits brought against the studios are from unknown or amateur writers. The established, professional fiction or screen writer rarely brings suit, and then only when he feels that his story has been lifted *in toto.* The more obscure and untrained writer, however, will sometimes bring suit if he believes a film has infringed on the smallest detail of his story. He makes no allowance for the law of coincidence.

Because of these two objections studios do not welcome scripts from unknown writers. Most concerns have lately instituted the policy of accepting stories only from established writers, or through recognized agents.

Apart from this angle, the agent through personal contact with producers, and with the aid of vocal salesmanship, is sometimes in a position to put through a sale that would have been lost if the story had merely been sent through the mail. He is also often able to secure a better price for a desired story. In addition, the agent in his travels and social contacts hears of certain story demands and shortages of which the writer himself could have no way of learning. Scenario departments prefer to deal with agents because the latter as a rule make a special study of the story needs of each studio. Even the most famous authors use agents.

Less well-known writers who have had magazine fiction printed or novels published, and who wish to deal direct with the studios instead of through an agent, should first write the studio, outlining their careers and published works, and determine whether the studio would be interested in considering any of their stories. By this method the need for an agent may sometimes be overcome, but it is not advised.

The better agents, to protect their standing with the studios, refuse to represent writers unless their works show an experienced and competent grade of authorship. Before agreeing to handle your stories the reputable agent will demand to see some specimens of your writing. The sales commission charged by agents is 10 per cent. For the benefit of writers who might desire to submit through an agent, I am herewith appending a list of representative agencies in the Hollywood studio sector that give particular attention to the handling of stories. Authors are advised to enter into correspondence with these agents before sending them any stories.

List of Story Agents

Adelphi Company, 5504 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood.
Bren & Orsatti, 9000 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood.
Collier & Wallace, 7046 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood.

EDINGTON & VINCENT, 6253 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood.
FREDDIE FRALICK, 9016 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood.
HOFFMAN-SCHLAGER, 8782 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood.
KINGSTON & MEYERS, 9122 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood.
LICHTIG & ENGLANDER, 405 Warner Theatre Bldg., Hollywood.
WM. MORRIS AGENCY, 1680 N. Vine St., Hollywood.
AL ROSEN, 6404 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood.
FELDMAN-BLUM-YOUNG, 9441 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills.
SELZNICK & JOYCE, 9460 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills.
SMALL-LANDAU CO., 6331 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood.
MAX SHAGRIN, 6253 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood.
H. N. SWANSON, 9018 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood.
I. N. SACKIN, 6605 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood.
FELIX YOUNG, 9441 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills.
JOHN ZANFT, 8782 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood.

CHAPTER XIV

Remuneration

THE amount of remuneration paid for stories, and to scenarists working in the studios, covers a wide and indefinite range. There is no fixed scale or rate of pay as is customary either with magazines and publishing houses or in the playwriting field. Much depends upon the demands of the moment, the favor with which the author or the manuscript is regarded, possible competitive bids from rival companies, and even the mood or financial prosperity of the studio at the time.

Prices and salaries often rise and fall. A certain studio may pay high rates during a certain season, then go on an economy campaign and slice down on its remuneration figures. There are certain rates of pay, however, which may be set down as fairly steady and customary in the majority of transactions.

The average amount now being paid for an original story by the major studios is about $3,000. This applies to a well-regarded manuscript by a lesser known Hollywood scenarist or free-lance author throughout the country. If the script is considered as subject to certain rewriting by the studio, or of only program-picture grade, the rate sometimes drops to $2,000, and in some cases $1,000.

Very seldom does a major studio offer less than $1,000 for any submitted script, except in the instance of a cheaper grade Western, which occasionally brings as low as $500. All prices on stories are paid regardless of the length in which they are submitted. Studios do not estimate remuneration on the basis of either words or pages, although naturally the script which is better told and more complete creates a greater desire and competition for its purchase.

Well-known and noted scenarists, fiction writers, novelists, and playwrights receive higher prices, because their works are more in demand and their rate of pay has already been established at a higher figure. Seldom are they paid less than $5,000 for an original screen story, and the price is more apt to be $7,500 or $10,000. These latter amounts are sometimes paid even to more obscure authors when their manuscripts are of special excellence or if they occasion spirited bidding between two or more studios. Some original stories have been sold for as high as $25,000, but this is rare and only the famous writers have been favored with such fancy figures.

The larger independent studios pay from $1,000 to $2,000 for stories, hardly ever exceeding this latter rate, usually paying the former. The smaller concerns, those which make the "quickie" films, set a price of from $300 to $500 for story purchases. They demand lots of action, hokum, and melodrama, but are not so exacting in regard to superior writing ability if the plot contains plenty of substance.

The independent studios have adopted a rather short-sighted policy in regard to manuscripts. The only place where they can compete with the major studios in an effort to turn out quality product is in the matter of stories. Yet it is here that they attempt to exert the most economy. All films rise or fall on their story values. It would appear more astute for the small film concerns to curtail expenses on other items and secure higher grade manuscripts.

Western stories are the most poorly paid subjects of all. It is hardly worth while for the free-lance writer to bother with these. The studios either prepare such yarns themselves, or buy film rights to short fiction in one of the Western story magazines, for which the pay rate is low. They have thousands of such stories to choose from and the average screen author should totally ignore this field. This advice is in reference to typical, everyday, cut-and-dried cowboy and rangeland yarns, not Western or outdoor stories of an epic sweep, such as *The Covered Wagon* or *Cimarron.*

Practically the same prices and principles adhere in the purchase of previously published stories and novels that apply to original screen stories. Rates run from $1,000 to $25,000, depending upon the author and the estimated value of the material, with certain famous or outstanding works bringing $50,000 and even $100,000. The nationwide publicity of the best seller or big Broadway hit, as well as their proven appeal to the public, is considered to be worth the extra outlay.

Sometimes when a story is bought from a new author and the manuscript reveals marked talent of some nature, the studio tenders the author an invitation to come to the studio and join its writing staff as a contract worker. If the author is a comparative beginner in the literary field or has as yet won but little renown, the salary proffered will probably be $150 or $200 a week. In the event that his experience and reputation are more established, contract terms will more likely call for $300, $400, and upward in exact ratio to his fame.

In a like manner, salaries for scenarists of all types on the ground in the studio centers, run anywhere from $150 to $1,500 a week. The rank and file receive $250 or $300, the medium group from $300 to $750, the outstanding writers from $750 to $1,500. A few members have been known to draw as high as $2,000 weekly at the peak of their studio careers.

These rates are paid irrespective of whether the writer specializes in original stories, dialogue, adaptations, or continuities. The ability and popularity of the scenarist, not the branch of writing in which he engages, is the ruling factor in deciding salaries. Certain writers, instead of working for a fixed salary, engage to write an original story, continuity, or dialogue for a specific sum, the element of time consumed in the task not entering into the transaction. The agreed amount of recompense may be any figure between $1,000 and $20,000, depending upon the writer's prestige.

Generally speaking, however, $300 to $400 may be set as the weekly pay check of the average established scenarist working for the major studios. Almost any writer who has been associated with the preparation of three or four fairly successful films can secure this amount.

Two or three new writing experiments have lately been tried out in Hollywood. Under one arrangement, a writer who has an idea for a story submits it to the studio, by word-of-mouth or by very brief written outline. If the scenario executives feel that the idea has good possibilities, they engage the writer to go forward with it on the following conditions: $1,000, for example, to be paid to the writer upon his starting under way with the story, another $1,000 to be paid if upon presentation of the first draft the story as developed is still approved by the studio, and a final $1,000 to be paid if upon its completion the company considers the story worthy of acceptance.

Under another arrangement, the writer submits his story idea, but instead of being paid flat sums of money he is placed on a weekly salary while he develops the story, with a bonus promised if the manuscript is finally accepted.

Studios are at variance as to the value of results gained so far from these experiments. If they have failed in some instances, this is only natural. The plan, fundamentally, is an excellent one. Under intelligent supervision there seems little doubt that much fine screen material can be created by these studio-writer cooperative methods. For the studios to contend otherwise would be to assert that General Electric, the duPont Corporation, the Bell Telephone Company, and other big organizations concerned with production of some kind should eliminate all experimental work of their own and only buy patents and inventions submitted to them from outside sources. If such experiments have failed in the studios, when they have been productive of so many benefits in other fields, then it has been due to misdirected energies or faulty studio supervision.

Slowly but surely the system of paying screen authors on a royalty basis, as is done in the case of novelists and playwrights, is coming to the fore in the film industry. Unquestionably it is the fairest basis of pay for the writing of many cinema works.

The case in favor of royalties for screen authors has been lucidly presented by Joseph Franklin Poland, one of the most competent and progressive screen writers in the cinema field, who, as long ago as July 28, 1931, offered the following pertinent comment in *The Film Mercury:*

> "Why haven't some of our leading producers adopted the royalty plan in respect to writers and screen stories? It is the most equitable basis of remuneration for creative authors. It works well in all other branches of writing; it would operate favorably for both producers and scenarists if adopted to the cinema.
>
> "To brother writers I suggest: Offer to *gamble* with the producers. Instead of asking your top salary, whatever it may be, take a standardized flat rate per week as a retaining fee on advance royalties. In doing this you put yourself on a par with all real writers—with every great novelist, playwright, or fictionist, past or present. They all had to gamble their time and efforts, every time they spent months writing a book, play, or stories. Why must we be different? Are we really so much greater than Shakespeare, Dickens, Goethe, Ibsen, Shaw?
>
> "Of course, only the good writers can survive under this system. But it is the road to what every creative writer wants and should have—royalties on his brain products. If you are a real writer you are creative. If you are creative you can write original stories. If you can write original stories, you are tired of putting *your* original ideas and plots into books or plays that someone else wrote, and having them called adaptations."

Payment on a royalty basis has been made to a few famous authors of plays and novels, but to date no producer or studio has instituted such a system as a general practice for screen writers. This is due not only to the aversion of the majority of studios to the plan, but, humorously enough, to the fact that many of the screen writers themselves oppose the idea, feeling that a bird in the hand is worth two in the realm of speculation; they would rather get a sure weekly check than take a chance on royalties.

Nevertheless, it seems quite evident that the day of the royalty plan for screen writers is not far distant.

CHAPTER XV

Copyright and Protection

THE writer who wishes fully to protect his screen story is facing a very difficult proposition. As far as getting a regular, routine copyright certificate from the Copyright Bureau, in Washington, is concerned, that is costly but simple.

He must first have his story, or a full synopsis, set up in type, then printed on paper in page form, inserting the words "Copyright, 1936, by James Wilson" on one of the first two pages. This is technically called "publishing" the story. He then sends two copies of this printed publication to the Copyright Bureau of the Library of Congress with the regular fee of three dollars. A few days later he will receive in return a certificate of registration on his copyright.

The registration fee, as we have seen, is small but the cost of setting the story in type and printing copies of it is high, running anywhere from $20 to $100, depending upon its length. Even this might be worth while if it gave the screen author any real copyright safeguard as he understands the term; but it fails completely of this purpose. The copyright registered in the Library of Congress prevents any one from copying your story *verbatim*, but it does not stop them from subtly pilfering it and rearranging it in part or in whole.

It does not pay the screen author to bother copyrighting his story with the Library of Congress. Apart from the cost, anybody who desires can steal the best part of your story, without fear of consequences. All the plagiarist has to do is to use *different words than are in the original.*

Frankly speaking, there is today no way in which the screen writer can fully protect his works. I have made an exhaustive study of the problem over a term of several years, and there is no sense in misleading writers as to the real facts.

As our laws and copyright regulations stand at present, there is no method by which a film author can secure even 50 per cent protection for his cinema manuscripts. This is due to the peculiar situation which exists in connection with screen stories and the cinema. The words which a screen author writes in telling his story, the exact verbal composition of his manuscript—barring, perhaps, a small amount of the dialogue—*are not used in the film.* They are, instead, translated into terms of *acting and pictorial action,* another form entirely. There is accordingly no legal way of proving beyond doubt that this acting and pictorial action, however similar it may be to a certain *written* story, is based on the complaining author's manuscript.

Legal suits by the hundred have been brought during the past few years charging cinema plagiarism. Some of these claims may have been justified; but almost without exception, even when it was admitted in court that the two stories were closely alike, hardly a single author has succeeded in winning his plagiarism suit in the high courts. The judges have repeatedly ruled that mere *similarity* of stories is insufficient proof of theft; the two stories must be practically identical in every respect.

Let us briefly examine some noted plagiarism suits in which the cinema was involved, and observe the rulings of the courts in regard to what constitutes story piracy. In presenting certain cases I am not attempting in any way to imply whether or not plagiarism actually existed in these instances. I am merely citing outstanding cases which employed the services of distinguished lawyers and which were taken to high courts for final decision. For, it is important to note, the complaining author sometimes wins in the lower courts; but he is seldom returned victor when his suit reaches the higher courts.

Case 1. Anne Nicholls, author of *Abie's Irish Rose,* sued Universal Pictures Corporation, charging that in producing *The Cohens and Kellys* the film company had infringed upon her play. Universal replied that they had used age-old material, basic situations which had been written many times before, and denied having used *Abie's Irish Rose* as a source.

There were many striking similarities between the two stories. Both concern a mix-up and controversy between an Irish and a Jewish family, when the daughter of one family marries the son of the other family. In both, the marriage is at first kept secret by the lovers, and when later revealed provokes a religious and racial argument between the various parents. In both, an offspring is born to the young couple, but after much haranguing, many trials and tribulations, the two families forget their prejudices and unite in happy friendship.

It can be seen from this that the two stories had much the same basic idea, and many of the same elements of appeal. A detailed examination of the two stories, for which there is no space here, reveals that in this case there were certainly more grounds for legal contention than exists in the majority of plagiarism suits.

The court decided in favor of Universal, ruling that there had been no unlawful infringement. But what is of even greater note, Judge Hand, in rendering his decision, stated that it is quite permissible to take certain ideas or portions of an author's work without entailing unlawful plagiarism. Here, in part, is the gist of the court's ruling:

"In the two plays at bar, we think that, both as to incident and character, the defendant took no more—assuming that it took anything at all—than the law allowed. . . .

"The only matter common to the two is a quarrel between a Jewish and an Irish father, the marriage of their children, the birth of grandchildren, and a reconciliation.

"If the defendant took so much from the plaintiff, it may well have been because her amazing success seemed to prove that this was a subject of enduring popularity. Even so, granting that novelty is not essential to a copyright, there is no monopoly in such a background. Though the plaintiff discovered the vein, she could not keep it to herself."

Case 2. H. C. Witwer brought suit against Harold Lloyd and his film company, charging that Lloyd's picture, *The Freshman*, was pirated from the Witwer story, *The Emancipation of Rodney*. Witwer testified that, previous to the making of the film, he had submitted his story to Lloyd, and it had been rejected. Lloyd admitted that some member of his company had read the story, but asserted that neither he nor the scenarists who wrote *The Freshman* had ever read Witwer's manuscript.

Both the Witwer story and the Harold Lloyd film dealt with a quaint young man who goes to college, tries to make the football team, but is not considered good enough to be other than a substitute on the side lines. In both stories the hero, at a time when his team appears to be going down to defeat in a big game, is sent into the game at the last moment by the coach. He becomes confused, mixes the signals, but finally wins the game for his school.

Here again we note definite similarities in theme, background, character, situations, and general appeal. Witwer won in lower courts, but when the case reached the high court, decision was reversed in favor of Lloyd, the court ruling that there had been no unlawful infringement, although admitting: "That there are similarities between the play and the story is manifest . . . and we must proceed to consider the legal significance of such similarities."

In deciding in favor of Lloyd the Appellate Court further ruled:

"We now turn to a comparison of the story and the play with a view to ascertaining what circumstantial evidence there is to overcome the direct evidence that there was no copying. . . . The question really involved in such comparison is to ascertain the effect of the alleged infringing play upon the public, that is, upon the average reasonable man.

"*The dramatic and motion picture rights of a copyrighted story do not cover the words . . . voice . . . motions or postures of the actors . . . or a plot . . . or an original novel treatment of a theme.*

"In the case at bar, if it be assumed that there are such similarities between the story and play as to provoke in the casual observer the consciousness that there is such a similarity between them, and that copying may be inferred therefrom, we are still confronted with the fact that mere similarity does not necessarily involve literary piracy or an infringement of a copyright. Such similarities then as exist would require further analysis to determine whether or not they are novel in the story and thus copyrightable. The copyright of a story only covers *what is new and novel in it.*

"After a casual reading of the story and a similar uncritical view of (the photoplay) it would not occur to the spectator . . . that he was seeing in moving-picture form the story. . . . If this is true, that is no copying and no infringement."

Case 3. The Mack Sennett Company was accused by E. E. Paramore of plagiarism of his poem *The Ballad of Yukon Jake.* The name of the film in which the literary piracy was said to have occurred was entitled *Yukon Jake.* This is important, for it was due to the similarity of titles, in addition to other facts, that a verdict was won by the author over the film company.

Paramore's poem, which had been widely published in many periodicals, was a burlesque of life in the Yukon, and its central character was a personage called Yukon Jake. He claimed infringement because, first, the film was a burlesque upon Yukon life, second, its central character was called Yukon Jake, third, the very title of the picture was *Yukon Jake.* Paramore contended that these facts eliminated any chance he had of personally disposing of motion-picture rights to his poem.

The Mack Sennett Company denied any plagiarism, and further asserted that there was nothing original or novel in the poem, that it was basically similar to poems by other writers.

To confute these arguments Paramore marshaled as expert witnesses several magazine editors and college professors, who testified that in style and treatment, *The Ballad of Yukon Jake* was an outstanding literary effort, original, unique, and distinctly different from any previously published work.

Judge James, of the Federal Court at Los Angeles, decided in favor of Paramore, and rendered the following verdict:

"The facts stated warrant a recovery of some amount of damages, if plaintiff possesses in the name, Yukon Jake, a property right which would exclude others from the use of it for motion-picture purposes.

"As the author has reserved to himself the value of his story and plot for motion-picture adaptation, he will also be protected in the right to use the name he has identified his story by, where conditions are such as has been described."

There is a salient fact to be observed in this decision. While a title of itself cannot be copyrighted, Judge James points out that when a title, through connection with a certain literary work, wins public recognition, the association of these two elements has a definite value and the infringement of them jointly may warrant a recovery of damages by the original author. It was largely this dual aspect of the case that won a verdict for the author, and this dual aspect is not present in the average plagiarism suit.

To cite further proof of the trend of high courts in ruling that not only is a similarity of stories insufficient proof of infringement, but that one party may actually take from another party's story without that plagiarism constituting *unlawful* infringement, let us refer to the most famous literary piracy suit in American history—that known as *The Bird of Paradise* case.

In this suit Grace A. Fendler sued Richard Walton Tully, playwright, and Oliver Morosco, theatrical manager, charging that *The Bird of Paradise* was plagiarized from her play, *In Hawaii.* Mrs. Fendler had written her play in 1909, and submitted it to Morosco in March, 1910. Morosco rejected the play. In 1911, Morosco presented a play called *The Bird of Paradise,* by Richard Walton Tully. Upon viewing the Tully play, Mrs. Fendler immediately brought suit, claiming piracy.

There was a marked similarity between the two plays. The parallel between the two was so emphatic, in fact, that even Tully conceded in court that "the similarities and resemblances between *In Hawaii* and *The Bird of Paradise* were so many and so striking that they could not have occurred by mere coincidence, but on the contrary that one of the parties must have had access to and appropriated some of the conceptions of the other."

At first it was contended by Tully that Mrs. Fendler must have borrowed from his play. Later, however, it was established that Mrs. Fendler had conceived and written her play before Tully had completed his. Finally the defendants conceded that they might have read and digested *In Hawaii* before the final script of *The Bird of Paradise* was written.

The case was carried through the courts for many years, first one side winning, then the other. At last it reached its court of last resort, the Court of Appeals of the State of New York. Here it was ruled that there had been no unlawful infringement. Final verdict was rendered in favor of Tully and Morosco.

Despite the fact that even Tully and Morosco had conceded that "the resemblances and similarities between *In Hawaii* and *The Bird of Paradise* were so many and so striking that they could not have occurred by mere coincidence," the Court of Appeals handed down the following judgment:

> "In general outline the plots of the plays . . . are dissimilar. . . . In spite of the entire dissimilarity of the two plays in theme and story, there are many similarities in detail. Perhaps this is inevitable in two plays about Hawaii.
>
> "Material which may have been derived from the plaintiff's play is either insignificant in itself, or, *as a result of the craftsmanship of Tully, has been changed in form and is used in entirely different combination.*
>
> "Even if a surreptitious reading of the play, *In Hawaii*, may have resulted in the introduction of some new material into *The Bird of Paradise*, where resemblance is close, the material is trivial in character, and where the material is more important in the development of the story, then, at most, *plaintiff's ideas have been appropriated, but used in different form and combination.*"

It can therefore be seen from these noted cases, which were carried through several courts, that even granting that an author perceives a definite similarity between a film and one of his works, and that he can further prove he previously submitted his story to the producer of that film, he still has only a very slight chance of establishing a case of *unlawful* infringement.

The author has a much better chance, however, by submitting his case to arbitration, if he is able to avail himself of this method. Both the *Authors' League of America* in New York and the *Screen Writers' League* in Hollywood use arbitration boards through which to settle, or attempt to settle, story differences between writers and producers.

Through these arbitration boards authors have sometimes succeeded in winning concessions, or damages, in cases which would probably have been lost if the writer had attempted to bring the producer into open court. When handled through arbitration the controversy is decided more on a factual and ethical basis than by way of legal technicalities. Thus the case is dependent more upon fairness than upon law. The percentage of victories for the author is accordingly larger.

Producers, however, are not legally bound to abide by the decision of the arbitration board, although they usually follow this course. There is also the fact that as a rule these arbitration boards handle only complaints in which members of either the *Screen Writers' League* or the *Authors' League* are involved. Only occasionally are exceptions made in this ruling. The writer-at-large must therefore rely upon the courts.

Few of the professional screen writers in Hollywood now bother to copyright their stories through the Library of Congress. Many of them use the method of registering their stories with the *Screen Writers' League*, in Hollywood. The fee for members of the League is 50 cents; for nonmembers, $1. A carbon copy of the original manuscript is deposited with the League, and registered as per date, title, and author. Copies to be used by the author for selling purposes are stamped with the League registration mark. It is not necessary to be a member of the League to utilize this service.

Registering a screen story with the League, or anywhere else, does not protect it from plagiarism, however. The same situation exists here as in the case of registering through the Copyright Bureau in Washington. The author is still faced with the task of proving that his story has been stolen or infringed upon in a very substantial manner to win damages. Registration with the League, however, is economical and it does establish a definite record of the contents of the story, the date when written, and by whom. This record may often prove of help to an author in substantiating his claim of prior right to a story. The address of the League will be found listed in the Appendix.

The theory and purpose of registering a story is to establish convincing legal proof of the contents of the manuscript and the date on which it was written. Naturally, when an author charges plagiarism he must be able to prove not only similarity, but that his story was written before the allegedly infringing manuscript. To do this he must bring forth definite evidence of dates.

Registration or the securing of a copyright are the two most direct ways of establishing the date of authorship of a story. However, in the event that the story has not been registered nor copyrighted, two or three reputable witnesses who will testify that they read the original story on a certain date, and qualify as to its contents, are usually accepted by the court as good legal proof. Registration, nevertheless, is a safer and better procedure.

For those who wish some sort of a definite registration of date, but are unable at the time to register through the *Screen Writers' League*, one of the simplest ways is for the author to send a copy of the manuscript to himself by registered mail, leaving the envelope sealed until needed in court.

Whatever system is used, the author should make certain that all date records are carefully filed away so that they may be easily produced in the case of any emergency.

CHAPTER XVI

Censorship—The Production Code

WITH censorship restrictions having grown more stringent in recent years, somewhat narrowing the scope of certain subjects and situations, especially in regard to sex and crime, authors should at least have a basic knowledge of general censorship standards before launching forth upon a screen-writing career.

Censorship restrictions differ in detail in the various states and in certain countries throughout the globe. For the writer, therefore, to attempt a study of the rules and regulations of each censor board, with their constant changes and minor deletions, would be far more confusing than helpful. In addition it is quite unnecessary for the author to make such an individual or detailed study. The studios do not demand it of him, and it would be futile for producers to attempt to shape their scripts in accordance with the demands of each and every censor board in regard to slight particulars. This is done later by local film cutters.

Fortunately, the restrictions of censors as a whole, however, are in most respects fundamentally the same, differing only as to details. Therefore, a knowledge of their general attitude in respect to what is considered fitting and proper for presentation on the screen will be quite sufficient for the writer to acquire.

This general attitude is comprehensively covered by the Production Code recently drawn up by the Hays office (officially named the Association of Motion Picture Producers). The code was established for the guidance of producers, in an effort to eliminate injurious and confusing film deletions after completion of a production, as well as to set up standards for the moral and social values of cinema entertainment. If the writer follows this code he need have no censor worries.

That the Hays office sincerely endeavors to hold the studios to a strict adherence to the standards of this code, I can offer liberal and authentic testimony, having been for two years Hays office contact executive and in charge of the censorship department for the RKO-Radio studios. Many were the entanglements in which I found myself engaged with Col. Jason S. Joy, Hollywood representative for the Hays office, when in the interests of the studio I endeavored to draw forth an O.K. on certain parts of a story to which the Hays office had registered an objection.

While we often differed on these film matters, I at all times found the Hays office representatives most efficient and striving for higher cinema standards. Joseph I. Breen is now Hollywood representative for the Hays office, Col. Joy having entered the active production field.

The Hays office film code follows:

THE PRODUCTION CODE

Underlying Principles of the Code

No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence, the sympathy of the audience shall never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil, or sin.

Correct standards of life shall be presented on the screen, subject only to necessary dramatic contrasts.

Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

Particular Applications

Crimes against the Law

These shall never be presented in such a way as to throw sympathy with the crime as against the law and justice or to inspire others with a desire for imitation.

1. Murder.
    - *a.* The technique of murder must be presented in a manner that will not inspire imitation.
    - *b.* Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail.
    - *c.* Revenge in modern times shall not be justified.
2. Methods of crime shall not be explicitly presented.
    - *a.* Theft, robbery, safe cracking, and dynamiting of trains, mines, buildings, etc., shall not be detailed in method.
    - *b.* Arson must be subject to the same safeguards.
    - *c.* The use of firearms shall be restricted to essentials.
    - *d.* Methods of smuggling shall not be presented.
3. Illegal drug traffic must never be presented.
4. The use of liquor in American life, when not required by the plot or for proper characterization, will not be shown.

Sex

The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.

1. Adultery, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated or justified, or presented attractively.

2. Scenes of passion should not be introduced when not essential to the plot. In general, passion should be so treated that these scenes do not stimulate the lower and baser element.

3. Seduction or rape.
    - *a.* They should never be more than suggested, and only when essential to the plot, and even then never shown by explicit method.
    - *b.* They are never the proper subject for comedy.

4. Sex perversion or any inference of it is forbidden.

5. White slavery shall not be treated.

6. Miscegenation is forbidden.

7. Sex hygiene and venereal diseases are not subjects for motion pictures.

8. Scenes of actual childbirth, in fact or in silhouette, are never to be presented.

9. Children's sex organs are never to be exposed.

Vulgarity

The treatment of low, disgusting, unpleasant, though not necessarily evil subjects should be subject always to the dictates of good taste and regard for the sensibilities of the audience.

Obscenity

Obscenity in word, gesture, reference, song, joke, or by suggestion is forbidden.

Dances

Dances which emphasize indecent movements are to be regarded as obscene.

Profanity

Pointed profanity or vulgar expressions, however used, are forbidden.

Costume

1. Complete nudity is never permitted. This includes nudity in fact or in silhouette, or any lecherous or licentious notice thereof by other characters in the picture.
2. Dancing costumes intended to permit undue exposure or indecent movements in the dance are forbidden.

Religion

1. No film or episode may throw ridicule on any religious faith.
2. Ministers of religion, in their character as such, should not be used as comic characters or as villains.
3. Ceremonies of any definite religion should be carefully and respectfully handled.

National Feelings

1. The use of the flag shall be consistently respectful.
2. The history, institutions, prominent people, and citizenry of other nations shall be represented fairly.

Titles

Salacious, indecent, or obscene titles shall not be used.

Repellent Subjects

The following subjects must be treated within the limits of good taste:

1. Actual hangings or electrocutions as legal punishment for crime.
2. Third degree methods.
3. Brutality and possible gruesomeness.
4. Branding of people or animals.
5. Apparent cruelty to children or animals.
6. Surgical operations.

CHAPTER XVII

Future Trends

CONSIDERABLE controversy surrounds the use of the terms *trend* and *cycle* in connection with series of films which are similar in theme, plot, or background.

Some studio executives assert that film cycles should be avoided; others say photoplay vogues are helpful to the box office; while certain analytical observers claim that in reality there is no such thing as a trend or cycle in films, that it is wholly a matter of imagination or coincidence. Certainly, from the viewpoint of the audience, the studios often seem to swamp the screen with a flood of stereotyped productions.

Regardless of what attitude one wishes to take concerning film cycles, and admitting that often the public itself has not been responsible for them, the facts remain that: (1) theatregoers in general sometimes do undergo a change of taste in relation to certain types of films; (2) whether the public demands it or not, studios frequently concentrate, almost unanimously, on particular kinds of stories and subjects. Therefore, from a practical writing viewpoint, there do exist definite trends in story demands, and the writer can profit from these demands regardless of whether they are basically sound or otherwise.

As to what the new trends may be during the next few seasons, I am going to present the opinions of some of the film industry's leading story editors, who have kindly written their thoughts specially for this volume.

Charles Beahan, Scenario Editor for Universal Pictures:

"The cinema will probably broaden its scope of appeal even further in the next season or two. Powerful dramas of epic qualities will continue to hold sway, but there will also be a demand for the deeply human story that strikes right into the home.

"Historical characters and colorful bygone eras are a rich field but new angles and fresh treatment will be necessary to hold public interest.

"Timely subjects, and those dealing with vital everyday events and affairs of interest to all, will be strong favorites."

Samuel Marx, Scenario Editor for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer:

"While the screen will always have a place for, and is most ably suited to, melodrama and action, it is my belief that strong human-interest films are coming into vogue.

" By this I mean films that touch close to the human foibles, eccentricities, and weaknesses; stories that strikingly reveal, preferably in a laughable way, the myriad little things that make up our daily life.

"Without deliberately meaning to toss in some Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer propaganda, the story that comes immediately to mind as being along the lines of this pattern is *Ah, Wilderness*."

Jeff Lazurus, Story Editor for Paramount:

"Early training as an exhibitor and theatre circuit executive taught me that trends exist only in the minds of people who either write about pictures or make them. The word 'trend' is much more a handy phrase than it is an Industry condition. A survey of the pictures which have been successful in any given year or period of years proves that there never has been any such thing as a 'trend' because there is hardly a year in which there were not successful comedies, successful spectacles, successful romances, successful dramas, in fact, successful films of all kinds.

"However, I do believe one thing: that the most significant new kind of entertainment for the next few years will be the increasingly broad availability of the classics.

"Then after that we shall have another reservoir to tap, periods and segments of history which, up to now, have been considered taboo; periods like the Spanish Inquisition, the strivings of Martin Luther and men like Charlemagne, Hindenburg, and so forth.

"Then the whole field, that which the cinema has already made use of and those I have listed above and many others pertinent thereto, will be available as new writing and creative minds find what we call new angles on all these people and periods, or what the erudite call new philosophies, connected with them. To give a rough example of what I mean by this, one can tackle a story about ancient Rome, as De Mille did in *Sign of the Cross*, or as Robert Graves does in *I, Claudius*. The latter is to us a new angle, to the scholar a new philosophy.

"If, however, we wish to visualize a big field of story material which, in my opinion, may give us what even I have been calling a trend, then I would say it will be Topical World Events. This will come sooner than we think. As a result of the World War, Woodrow Wilson's trick of making statesmen bring the world into their confidence, the world fraternalism brought on by the depression, the new world-wide thinking about common economic problems, political situations and headline people, publications like *Time*, writers like Lippmann, the people of the earth are becoming conscious of the world they are actually living in. These current elements which are exciting people everywhere will sooner or later become our most important and most popular motion-picture subjects . . . only that wouldn't be a trend, it would be the same principle of showmanship that filmed *My Four Years in Germany*."

David Matthews, Story Editor, Warner Bros. Pictures:

"If one establishes a trend it is by a fluke, except, of course, in those cases where timeliness enters in. In cases where the public interest has been aroused to a white heat on a given theme or subject, any producer with the intelligence to select a good story dealing with that theme, and an organization to produce it, can be the first on the market and hence might be said to establish a trend. Take, for instance, *Public Enemy No. 1*, *G Men*, etc.

"On the other hand, trends established by pictures like *It Happened One Night*, *Pasteur*, *Little Women*, etc., seem to be entirely a matter of public response. A producer makes a comedy drama, a period picture or what-not, and offers it to picture goers. The picture goers either take it in a big way or they do not. If they like it, other producers begin to imitate, and you have a new trend—the whole process being completely unpremeditated and hence impossible to forecast."

Albert M. Persoff, Story Editor, RKO-Radio Pictures:

" Personally, I feel that the significance of trends has been overemphasized. Essentially, 'the play's the thing.'

"As a rule, a good picture that does not fit into any one of the so-called trends or cycles will do good business, and, inversely, a poor picture in and of a trend will do poor business.

"Concerning the future, the program of each studio, if properly balanced, will include every type of production in an effort to present a wide variety of appeal.

"If there is one real tendency, I should say it is in the direction of subjects presenting opportunities for genuine and unique artists as distinguished from those possessing mere superficial and second-rate talents.

"The magnificent reception of the Grace Moore and Fred Astaire pictures has paved the way for the featuring of other distinctive artists and, at the same time, such subjects will make it increasingly difficult for inferior talents to command the interest of audiences."

PART TWO

Specimen Manuscripts

CHAPTER XVIII

The Original Story

Headed for Broadway, an original story that was successfully written and sold to a studio, is herewith presented for examination and study. It shows in a definite and concrete way the form and style in which a cinema manuscript may be submitted, without its necessarily being written in regular fiction fashion.

I have purposely selected a typical story purchase, rather than a manuscript marked by any unusual features or technique in the telling of the story. I feel that this offers a better representation of the style and manner of story presentation now current among professional screen writers.

Headed for Broadway, which was purchased by Pathe, is here given word for word, exactly as it was submitted by the author. It is told in approximately 10,000 words, which in the case of this particular story allowed the central character to be well established and drawn, the plot to be covered definitely but rapidly, yet not going into minute details. As this was a story the appeal of which was its colorful main character, its sweep and glamour of backgrounds, the author wisely omitted multitudinous particulars and details which would have slowed up the dash and vitality of the plot.

Because the other two specimen manuscripts presented in this volume contain the regulation love interest, an original story has been selected that omits the usual type of photoplay romance.

It will be noted from this manuscript that screen stories do not have to be as perfect in literary style as the short story or novel, in fact there is often a certain informality about them. It is the substance of the story that usually counts, not its special literary merit, although, as I have previously pointed out, literary embellishment is often a decided asset in scoring a favorable impression with many producers and scenario editors.

Original stories do not have to be submitted in the exact style of this specimen. The author may write his work in typical fiction style if he desires. This is never done by professional studio writers, however. As indicated by the present manuscript, they prefer a style that is something of a cross between straight fiction and a detailed synopsis.

Any tense may be used, past or present. Established screen writers mostly use the present tense, contending that it better encourages quick and effective visualization of the action. In this instance, the author uses past tense to establish the individuality of his leading character, then as the plot gets fully under way he shifts to the present tense.

HEADED FOR BROADWAY

By Thomas Benton

Everybody likes a yarn about a dazzling, colorful character, a brilliant personality who hits the high spots in life and sets the world a-talking . . . a reckless, extravagant individual who does the things most of us would like to do but can't, or don't. So, listen in on this saga of Charlie Hackett of Allentown, Pa. (it could have been Skowhegan, Me., or Kalamazoo, Mich.), who was born to burn up Broadway and set more tongues wagging along the Gay White Way than any guy who has hit the big burg in many a day.

Now, you never can tell what's actually inside a man until he gets an opportunity to really strut his stuff. Some famous old bard once said that many a flower is born to waste its fragrance on the desert air. Well, there's many a guy chock full of big ideas and notions, twiddling his time away behind some desk or counter merely because he hasn't had a chance to put his ideas into circulation.

Charlie Hackett was just that sort of fellow. Self-confident, egotistical, mentally alert, he was a one o'clock guy in a nine o'clock town. Charlie always felt that he was too big for Allentown. He wanted to be somebody. A fast talker, with a great line of gab, he had a winning personality and in spite of his arrogance he was a favorite with everyone.

(*Note.* Charlie's exact age is not important. He can be anywnere from twenty-five to thirty-five years, and is a Jimmy Cagney, Lee Tracey, William Powell, Jack Oakie, or Lew Ayres type, depending upon the way in which it is played.)

Even though Charlie was only running the newsstand at the Penn House, Allentown's leading hotel, he had *big ideas.* He had held various other jobs in his career but had taken over the newsstand so that he could observe all the big shots that came into town. He was getting ready for the time when *he* could *step out.*

Even in his small, limited way Charlie always tried to be a big shot. Regardless of the size of his bank roll he was a sport and a spender from the word "Go." He always believed in buying the best, when he could afford it, and sometimes when he could not. This was not four-flush with Charlie Hackett—it was a natural instinct in him. He always carried his money in as large bills as possible. He hated one-dollar bills—they made him feel cheap.

Charlie had a philosophy all his own. He used to say to his buddy, George Andrews, who worked as teller in the Allentown State Bank:

"Don't worry, I'm not going to be a flunky all my life! I'm going to go places and do things. But it takes a bank roll to get started. Money makes money. Nobody wants to do anything for those who need help, but let folks think that you *don't need them* and they'll fight to do things for you. Some day I'm going to get hold of a chunk of dough and then I'll show this town a few things that will make it sit up and take notice."

Clumsy, slow-thinking George (a Stuart Erwin type) was the exact opposite of Charlie. He was a penny pincher, always stinting, saving money, denying himself the things he wanted. He worshiped Charlie, and was always greatly concerned about

Charlie's extravagance. "But, you're not doing so bad right now, Charlie," he would say. "You're making good money, if you'd only save some, instead of tossing it all away."

Charlie scoffed at such ideas. There was nothing picayune about *him.* A measly $60 a week? That was just chicken feed . . . not enough to keep a guy in spending practice . . . he was talking about *real* coin . . . enough so that you could really make a splash.

"*Think* pennies and you'll *make* pennies all your life," was Charlie's theory. "Shoot high and you may land in the big money some day. That's all money is good for anyway—to be spent. The only complaint I have is that I can't get enough of it."

When it came to dames, Charlie was quite a chaser. Most girls, however, did not last very long with him. He tired of them quickly. Perhaps it was because most of the girls with which Charlie came into contact did not have "class." And in girls, as in everything else, Charlie was always looking upward. He was always looking for something better to come along. Besides, Charlie regarded girls as something in the nature of property that must be bought, the same as other luxuries. "Dames are expensive but they're nice to have around," he would say. "Only they wear out too quickly, the same as anything else you buy."

Charlie's latest flame was Polly Taylor, the petite and sexy hat-check girl who had recently arrived at the hotel. At first Polly ritzed him. She thought Charlie was small-town stuff. Her quarry were traveling salesmen out for a good time, and usually willing to spend a little money. She soon found out that she had Charlie wrong. He spent more money on her one night than three salesmen would have spent in a week. From that evening on he had her eating out of his hand.

That was the way Charlie always worked with dames. "You've got to make some sort of a flash to attract women," he told George. "And the easiest way to do it is to be generous with money. A guy may be lame, halt, or crooked, but if he is a good spender he can cover up a multitude of sins."

Charlie studied all the guests as they checked in at the hotel. He observed how the quiet, unassuming chap received no attention or service, while the loud, flashy, ostentatious guest, who made an important entrance with plenty of handbags and trunks, was swamped with service and given royal attention by everyone from the manager down the line. He noted, also, what a difference a generous tip made among the bellboys, waiters, and employees, how in their eyes the stature of a man depended entirely upon the amount of coins he tossed them. All these details Charlie filed away in his mind.

Charlie was always doing something to attract attention in Allentown. He was always the first to try out anything new, whether clothes, cafés, or women. Every night he made the rounds. He gambled at everything, punchboards, raffles, lotteries, or the horses. Anything for action. That's what he craved. He never squawked when he lost—he would risk his last dollar on the spin of a wheel. He always played hunches. And, somehow or other, Charlie usually had a way of getting a break of luck when he was down to rock bottom and needed it.

Now, if he had been anyone other than Charlie Hackett he might have continued forever in his insignificant role as the local spendthrift of Allentown, Pa. But Charlie was too colorful and dramatic a character for fate to allow him to remain permanently obscured in a one-horse town. Bigger things were cut out for him. The world was longing for dazzling personalities and Charlie Hackett was destined to be one.

Charlie knew this, he felt it in his bones. So he just waited, biding his time for the break to arrive. *And one day it came.* On that morning the whole town was wildly excited. Charlie noticed folks waving and shouting to him as he drove down to work. And when he arrived at the hotel somebody shoved the morning *Herald* in front of Charlie and showed him what it was all about. There, before his eyes blazed forth the following headline story:

> CHARLIE HACKETT HEIR TO MILLIONS;
> UNCLE JASPER WILLS HUGE FORTUNE
>
> *Melbourne, Australia:*—Charles Hackett, of Allentown, Pa., is named as the sole heir to the fortune of Jasper K. Jones, famous old pioneer who settled in Australia 40 years ago. This was revealed when an old and misplaced will was discovered by authorities, early last week.
>
> Mr. Jones, who was a recluse and noted for his eccentricities, died several months ago. Identity and whereabouts of the heir have only just been ascertained after a lengthy search, etc., etc.

The entire population of Allentown was agog over the news. All except Charlie. He accepted it in his confident, self-assured way. It simply meant that now he could be what he knew he was always cut out for, a big-shot spender. Charlie noted, however, the new respect with which he was greeted in town, even though he had not yet received the money, and how even Mr. Dawson, president of the Allentown bank, was solicitous in regard to his health and welfare when he paid a visit to George.

When Charlie climbed the rickety old stairs leading to the offices of lawyer Scrogges, however, there was a surprise in store for him. Scrogges drew several legal-looking documents from his desk and announced that he had some rather discouraging news to impart. The newspapers, he said, had somewhat exaggerated the value of Jasper K. Jones' estate. When his uncle died he did leave rather vast holdings in the way of acreage and real estate, but when the executors had finally finished paying off the heavy mortgages and back taxes the estate had shrunk considerably in value. It was nothing like the millions reported.

For a moment Charlie was stunned, but he did not bat an eye. However, lawyer Scrogges explained, the executors had been able to salvage something out of the estate. It would total close to $50,000 in cash . . . enough so that Charlie would never have to worry the rest of his life.

A drop from millions to $50,000 would probably be a crushing blow to anyone else. But Charlie heard only one thing—$50,000, fifty thousand iron men, coin of the realm! He asked only one question: "Is that $50,000 a certainty—can I bank on it?" A certified check was already on its way, Scrogges assured him; it would be here within a few days. "That's all I want to know," declared Charlie, "You can handle the other details—just get that $50,000 to me as quickly as possible."

Charlie and George held a grand powwow that night over a couple of drinks in the Casino café. "Now you can open up that roadhouse that you've been talking about for the past two years," said George. "With $50,000 you'll be a big shot in this town."

But that wasn't Charlie's speed. "Not me!" he announced with decision. "For years I've waited for this chance to *be somebody.* Do you think I'm going to waste my time in this burg, being a Main St. magnate, mixing around with a lot of Babbitts, Rotarians, and small-town punks? That's the bunk! You can't make any real money or be anybody by mixing with pikers and cheapskates . . . you've got to mingle with the big shots to get into the big money."

George gaped at him, open-eyed. "Well, what *are* you going to do?" Charlie banged the table. "I'm going to head for a *big* town! Small towns are too smart. They know all about you from the cradle to the grave. A guy can't sneeze in a hick burg without everybody knowing the full details. In a big city it's different. They don't ask any questions. They're easy to fool."

"You mean some place like Harrisburg or Philadelphia?" queried George incredulously.

"No, better than that!" declared Charlie. "I'm going to a spot where all the guys are so smart they stopped thinking years ago . . . where they take you only at your face value . . . and don't stop to ask questions . . . to the biggest sucker town in the world—*New York City!*"

George gaped at him in amazement. "You're crazy, Charlie! They'll take you over the jumps so fast in New York you won't know what hit you. Why, you'll be broke in three months!"

"Yeah? Well I've got a few ideas myself," Charlie replied. And I'd rather blow this dough in where people will know you're on earth than to dole it out in this frog pond for the next thirty years. *I'm going to make a big noise while it lasts*—and you're coming with me. I'll need a secretary. You're dumb, George, but honest." Charlie raised his glass: "So, here's to New York! We'll either *take it*—or *be taken,* but we're going to have one grand and glorious time as long as the coin holds out!"

A few days later Charlie is down at the local depot making arrangements for railway bookings to New York. No ordinary berths for Charlie, however. He is determined to hit New York *in style.* He feels that the right entrance means everything. *Charlie orders a specially chartered train to take him to New York.* The clerk is nonplused. He hasn't had an order like that since Queen Marie of Rumania visited the town. It will be very expensive, he says. Charlie tells him that he didn't ask what it would cost—he wants a special train! "And be sure it has a buffet and observation car on it," Charlie orders.

When word spread around Allentown that Charlie Hackett had ordered a special just for himself and George the town thought he had gone mad. Even the local newspapers see an important story in it and wire the yarn in to the New York dailies. They pounce on it with glee.

The day before their scheduled departure an auto truck backs up to Charlie's quarters and starts unloading bags, valises, and trunks of every description. There is enough luggage for ten people, all emblazoned with the initials "C.H." in large letters. "My Gawd!" exclaims George, "What are we going to do with all this baggage. We haven't enough stuff to fill half of them." Charlie surveys them admiringly. "Well, fill up the rest with books, carpets, furniture, or rocks. We've got to have plenty of swell luggage when we arrive in New York. Only punks travel with light baggage."

Charlie has a farewell scene with Polly before he leaves. Polly had hoped to horn in on the trip. But Charlie had different ideas. He didn't believe in mincing words. "Sorry, darling," he tells her, "You've been O.K. but I'm headed for places now . . . you'd only crab my act." He pulls some bills out of his pocket and flips them to her. "Here, these will help to heal your broken heart."

Half the town turns out at the depot when the Hackett special is ready to steam out for New York. The municipal band is there in all its glory, banners and placards are swinging in the breeze with such inscriptions as: "Good Luck, Charlie Hackett," "Give Our Regards to Broadway," and "Don't Forget Allentown, Pa." Whistles blowing, band a-playing, the train finally pulls out . . . with Charlie and George arrayed on the observation platform waving a majestic adieu.

In New York, reporters and photographers from every daily are on hand to meet the train when it pulls into Pennsylvania station. It is just the kind of a colorful, human-interest yarn that the city editors are looking for. They have instructed their star reporters to lay on it heavily with plenty of illustrations and details.

At first the press boys are inclined to regard the whole episode as a huge joke, the crazy escapade of some small-town yokel. But if they came to razz they remain to marvel. Charlie invites them all into the buffet car for a couple of drinks, he passes around boxes of cigars so fast they are dizzy, he parries their joshing remarks with snappy comebacks that leave them defeated but respectful. In a few minutes he has them under his spell.

Before they leave he gives them a parting broadside. "You can tell the people of this fair city that Charlie Hackett is going to rip the roof of New York wide open. I'm going to burn up Broadway, like it has never been scorched before! I'm going to show the town how to really spend money!"

Charlie makes a grand entry into the swanky Ritz-Plaza Hotel, which he has been informed is the most exclusive hostelry in New York. The room clerk is far from impressed when Charlie and George stride up to the desk. Charlie's clothes, while new, are a bit too flashy and his manners too loud and aggressive. But when the clerk perceives the array of bellhops one after another coming in through the swinging doors with arms full of grips, valises, and bags of every variety, he quickly changes his attitude. He takes on a new air of respect and homage. If there is any doubt still left in the clerk's mind, Charlie floors him by announcing that he wants the best suite of rooms in the house. "Four bedrooms, three baths, two drawing rooms, and a serving kitchenette," Charlie orders, as he signs the register with a flourish. Charlie gets service, and plenty of it, from that moment on.

Next morning the papers are full of stories and pictures of Charlie. He reads them as he enjoys a sumptuous breakfast in bed. "Take a glimpse at some of these headlines, George," he beams. . . . 'Million Dollar Kid Visits Gotham'. . . . 'Heir to Millions Plans to Burn Up Broadway'. . . . 'Millionaire Playboy Here to Conquer Broadway'. . . . We've knocked them for a loop, George, and we haven't even started."

George is emptying the trunks, unloading some of the junk and odds and ends that were stuffed into them to weigh them down. He shakes his head: "You're sure going to get yourself into a mess of trouble when folks find out you've been bunking them." The phone rings. It is more reporters who want new dope on Charlie's plans. This time it is for the evening papers. The yarns about "The Million Dollar Kid" have caught the public fancy. The city editors are hollering for more copy. Charlie knows the value of publicity. "Send them right up," he says, as he orders George to lay out plenty of drinks and cigars.

With the papers backing him up with sensational stories, Charlie is thrust into fame overnight. He becomes one of the highlights of the town. He is the center of attention whenever he passes through the lobby of the hotel. True to his word, Charlie embarks on a spending spree that flabbergasts even reckless old Broadway. He buys suits by the dozen, shoes by the score, hats and neckties in wholesale lots. To the shopkeepers he is a marvel. They spread all kinds of legends about him. These are quickly picked up by the columnists. He storms the revues, the cafés, the gambling casinos, the night clubs, and every other spot where celebrities are wont to gather. He buys nothing but the finest imported Perfectos and wines, spending with a reckless abandon that staggers the town.

Charlie flashes $1,000 bills left and right and always carries a large roll. In the matter of tips he also sets new standards of extravagance. He tosses off $20 and $50 bills like they were nickels and dimes. He asks orchestra leaders to play special numbers and never slips the leader under a century note. His generosity gets him results, however. He virtually owns any place as soon as he enters it. No matter how crowded a café or night club may be, there is always room for Charlie—even if somebody has to be thrown out. He is an idol among the waiters, cigarette girls, and bus boys.

By now he is known everywhere, and pointed out, as "The Million Dollar Kid." His fame under this sobriquet has become so general that everyone has lost track of his real name. From newsboys to bankers they all call him "Kid."

Appreciating the importance of a flashy car, the Kid orders a special de luxe body to be created for him. No ordinary car for the Kid. In addition to its long racy lines and ultramodern appearance, he has had built into the back compartment a special miniature disappearing bar, with ice-cube frigidaire and everything, for the mixing and serving of drinks and smokes. It becomes a traveling advertisement for the Kid. Traffic officers make way for it—they too like the Kid's generosity. Crowds gather whenever it pulls up to the curb.

Dames in all walks of life push one another around to get a look at the famous "Million Dollar Kid." His lavishness and the glamour that surrounds him hold a special appeal for the fair sex. As for the Kid, he looks them all over and dates up a few of the attractive ones.

None of them particularly appeal to him, however, until one night in a café he lamps the blonde and beautiful Lucille Hampton, night-club revue star, who is dining there with her manager and sweetie, Bill Bradford. Lucille has "It" sticking out all over her and the Kid cannot take his eyes off her. To him, she spells "class," the niftiest girl he has laid his eyes on to date.

"*I'd like to buy that!*" the Kid murmurs to George as he continues to stare at the actress. Lucille notes the Kid's raptured gaze. So does her manager-sweetie. "You seem to have scored quite a hit with the Million Dollar Kid," Bradford remarks. "Maybe we could interest him in putting up some capital for our new revue."

Bradford manages to get an introduction to the Kid and in a few minutes they are all sitting together around the table drinking champagne. The Kid falls for Lucille. Before the evening is over he agrees to back the night-club star in her new revue.

When the Kid goes for a dame he always does things right—and Lucille is no exception. He begins to shower her with flowers, candy, and other gifts. They step out together to some of the cafés, gambling casinos, etc., and make quite a splash. At first, Bradford encourages this. It is great publicity, and in addition he believes that Lucille is merely stringing the Kid along, pulling his leg, for the good of the revue.

All this time George is going nuts because of the way the money is pouring out, and the bills pouring in. He is up to his neck in figures, and makes direful predictions to the Kid. The Kid, however, is not worried. He goes spending merrily on, buying bigger and better presents for Lucille.

Lucille by this time has come to the conclusion that the Kid is too good a catch to lose. She is now two-timing Bradford; carrying on a hot affair with the Kid. It is in the midst of rehearsals for her revue. Some of the gossip writers on the dailies get wind of the situation and print insinuating stories. Bradford goes into a rage, accuses Lucille of double-crossing him, demands that she cease going out with the Kid. Lucille refuses. They have a stormy scene. Bradford makes an issue of it. Lucille is indifferent to his wrath . . . she will continue to go out with the Kid. Bradford quits cold on the rehearsals, tells her she can get someone else to stage the revue, and walks out. Lucille phones the Kid. He tells her not to worry—he will be right down and *stage the rehearsals himself!* Nothing ever fazes the Kid.

Meanwhile expenses have been mounting, bills piling up.

The Kid has been going at a great pace. George has been worrying himself into a sweat. Finally things reach a climax. One morning George confronts the Kid with the hard, cold facts. He has a batch of bills in one hand and a row of adding-machine figures in the other. He tells the Kid that if they were to attempt to pay half the bills already on hand they would be bankrupt—and there are more bills coming. "I told you this would happen," George moans, "You're broke right now, Charlie, but you don't know it!"

The Kid doesn't bat an eye, however. "No, and neither does anybody else know it!" he replies. "We'll have to hold off on those bills until I can find some way of making a few dollars." The Kid realizes that he is in a spot. He had been sublimely unaware that the bank roll had been melting away so rapidly. He knows that he must now take a gamble of some kind in the hope of getting a new wad. And when the Kid gambles he always plays hunches. He decides to give the stock market a whirl. He takes stock of his finances and finds that he has $2,500 in cash in his pockets, and a little over $3,000 in the bank. That gives him a total of about $5,000 to play with.

The Kid grabs the morning paper and scans the financial columns, looking for some kind of a hunch in the low priced stocks. He pores over column after column. Suddenly his eyes catch the words "Jasper Consolidated Mining." The Kid stops short. . . . "*Jasper!*" he exclaims. . . . He reads on. . . . It is a brief news item saying: "One of the most active of the lower priced stocks is Jasper Consolidated Mining, now selling in the neighborhood of $7 a share. The Government's new policy on silver is causing wide interest in these metal securities."

"It's a hunch!" exclaims the Kid. "Uncle Jasper started me off—he brought me all this luck. Maybe he can pull me out! Come on, George, we're heading for Wall St." George tries to stop him . . . tells him this is no time for gambling . . . it's a situation calling for sound business action. . . . But the Kid only laughs.

As the Kid's luxurious limousine winds its way down through the financial district and pulls up before one of the brokerage buildings a crowd quickly gathers about it. He and George have to push their way into the building. They make for the offices of Dutton & Co. and as they walk through the board room word quickly passes among the speculators and customers regarding his identity. "It's the Million Dollar Kid," "What's he doing down here?" "What's he buying?" is heard on all sides. There is a distinct commotion. Everybody wants to know what the Kid has up his sleeve. Even the clerks and stenographers stare after him as he enters the manager's sanctum. The manager is pleased and honored at the visit. What can he do for the Kid? The Kid informs him that he wants to open up a margin account for the purchase of a little stock. The manager gets out an order blank . . . certainly . . . what will it be . . . U.S. Steel . . . or perhaps American Tel. & Tel.? Neither, the Kid informs him. . . . He wants to buy a thousand shares of Jasper Consolidated. . . . The manager is somewhat taken back . . . Jasper Consolidated? . . . but he fills out the order blank . . . apparently the Million Dollar Kid must have inside information of some kind.

The order blank is handed in through the order window . . . it passes from clerk to clerk, each one excitedly staring to see what stock the Kid is buying. . . . By the grapevine system word reaches the board room. The customers excitedly comment about it among themselves. "The Million Dollar Kid is buying Jasper Consolidated!" A couple of the customers hurry to the phone booths to relay the information to other brokerage houses. The Kid completes his transaction. He instructs the broker to buy another thousand shares of Jasper if the stock rises four points. The entire assemblage stares with awe after the Kid as he hurries homeward.

Next morning while the Kid is scrubbing under a hot shower, George comes rushing madly in, waving the morning *Times*. Jasper Consolidated has climbed 11 points! George reads from the paper: "A buying rush which hit the market late yesterday sent the price of Jasper Consolidated skyrocketing up over the $18 mark. The rumor is abroad in the Street that powerful interests are now back of this stock. Over 80,000 shares were sold in hectic trading." Jumping into a robe, the Kid doesn't hesitate a second. "Quick, get the brokers on the phone!" he barks. "Find out what Jasper is selling for this morning—and ask them if they bought that other thousand shares!"

George grabs the phone . . . gets the brokers on the wire. "Jasper is now selling for $22," he shouts to the Kid. "The brokers bought that extra thousand shares at 11½ . . . they want to know if you wish them to buy more?" "Hell, no!" yells the Kid. "Tell them to sell the whole works at the market, and mail us a check. Let some other suckers hold the bag!"

The Kid has cleaned up over $20,000 on the stock deal. His immediate money worries are over. He is once again his old self, planning new spending forays. The papers learn of his dip into Wall St. As usual they exaggerate the facts. They paint him as a heavy plunger . . . tell how everything he touches turns to gold . . . how by clever manipulation he has cleaned up another fortune. The public goes for it hook, line, and sinker. The Kid is bigger than ever. But George is still worried. He thinks they ought to go home.

On the top of this new wave of fame everybody starts coming to the Kid with all sorts of promotion schemes. They imagine that he has millions, that everything he associates with is destined for huge success. They want to horn in on his money and prestige. They come to him with mines, oil wells, musical shows, film companies. They want him to buy or sponsor hockey teams, baseball clubs, and airplane flights. One promoter comes in with a giant pugilist "bigger and better than Carnera," with whom they can "win the championship." The Kid is interested in anything that will give him action and keep him in the limelight. He goes in on some of these deals, particularly the sporting propositions that bring him before the public eye in a colorful way.

Many of these schemes are phoney setups. The supposedly fabulous wealth of the Kid has become so widespread that now even the "con men" and gamblers are setting their caps to "take" him. They look upon him as a small-town chump who has come into a lot of easy money and gone wild spending it. They figure they might as well grab some.

Chief among those who have their eyes set on the Kid as a sucker prospect is Nick Rosenthal, big-shot racketeer and gambler. Nick is aligned with all members of "the Mob." He runs poolrooms, gambling casinos, and saloons. He owns a racing stable which he manipulates at the tracks by means of "pepped up" horses and framed races. His horses have not been faring so well of late due to too much doping and manipulation. He has also met some other reverses and is looking for a "killing" of some sort to fatten his wad.

Nick avails himself of an old acquaintanceship with Lucille. Knowing Lucille's ways, he has an idea that she is only playing the Kid for what she can get out of him. He sends for her and feels her out. How would she like to make some quick and easy money? The Kid's money can't last forever at the rate he's going, Nick tells her, and she might as well get some of it before another dame steps in and grabs it. Lucille knows her Broadway. Also, she has noticed that of late the Kid's eyes have had a tendency to rove in other directions. She's strong for the idea, as long as there's no rough stuff. Nick explains that there is nothing to it. She is merely to wait until Nick gets things lined up . . . then when he gives the order she is to steer the Kid over to Nick's gambling joint, and be sure the Kid has plenty to drink before he gets there. She'll get a nice chunk of dough for her trouble. It's O. K. with Lucille.

The Kid's extravagance in everything, his manifold activities, keep him constantly in hot or cold water. He now has two extra cars, a big sporty roadster and a small, imported racing car in which he burns up the roads. He is flush with money one minute and broke the next. But to New York the Kid is always a Millionaire. Every time the Kid makes a strike of some kind George is always urging him "We'd better go back home *now*—while we have some money."

Lucille was right about the Kid. His eyes have been wandering of late. And one day he spots the fashionable Diana Weston in the bar at the Waldorf-Astoria. Diana comes from one of the old, but impoverished, New York families. She is not only strikingly beautiful, but she has polish, refinement, and sophistication written all over her; also a certain haughtiness and coldness which goes with her type. The Kid sits transfixed, watching her at the bar, as he and George order another drink. Diana is surrounded by a group of admirers, society men, a Baron, a Count, etc. They are on their way to the races at Belmont Park. The Kid listens in on snatches of their conversation.

Diana is the ultimate to the Kid. He has never seen anything like her before. Enraptured, he nudges George, "*There's* what I call class. I'd sure like to buy *that!*" It's an ominous sign whenever the Kid makes such a statement. George is apprehensive. The Kid inquires regarding Diana's identity, what she does, etc. Diana is modern in her ideas. She is both a sports-woman and a socialite. Not sufficiently wealthy to pay for these luxuries herself, she has found her beauty and charms sufficiently attractive to men to gain most of her ambitions. The Kid's eyes never leave Diana until she and her group exit from the cafe. George taps him. "Snap out of it! You've got one dame already that's running you ragged. Besides, this skirt is out of your class—you couldn't get near her with a ten-foot pole." "Oh, Yeah?" replied the Kid, "Well, this little guy never went after anything yet that he didn't get—and I think I want *that!*"

Meanwhile Nick Rosenthal has gone forward with his plans to take the Kid over the jumps. He is now ready to spring the trap. That afternoon he visits Lucille at her night club, and as they partake of a couple of highballs he gives her final instructions. She is to steer the Kid up against the roulette table. They will let him win at first as a come-on . . . they will comment how lucky he is . . . until he is ahead of the game to the tune of $25,000. A big crowd will be watching by that time. Then they will begin to give him the works. Surrounded by a large gallery the Kid is bound to plunge . . . and before he winds up they will take him to the tune of one hundred grand. Lucille is to spur the Kid on and see that he doesn't weaken when he begins to hit this losing streak.

But it is right here that some of the extravagant tipping flung out by the Kid pays him a dividend. Florette, one of the cigarette girls in the night club, who has been the recipient of many a $20 tip from the Kid, overhears some of the conversation between Lucille and Rosenthal as she pauses unnoticed near by to arrange her cigarettes. She does not hear a great deal but she gets enough to know that apparently something is going to be pulled off on the Kid, whom she thinks is one grand guy.

That night, when the Kid calls for Lucille, Florette gets an opportunity to tell him what she saw. "I couldn't hear all they said," she whispers, "But I did hear Rosenthal say something about your being allowed to win up to $25,000 . . . then they would begin to give you the works." Florette's information is an eye opener to the Kid. A steely look comes to his face. So he was being played for a sucker. He thanks Florette, slips her a roll of bills. She warns him Rosenthal is dangerous. The Kid decides to await developments, while he evolves some course of action. As the evening wears on Lucille plies him with drinks.

He pretends to feel his liquor. When Lucille finally suggests that they go over to the Casino for a little fun the Kid seems more than willing. "Sure, it's a swell idea," he says.

As usual, the Kid attracts attention when he enters the Casino. Rosenthal greets him warmly. The Kid is apparently in great spirits . . . but he is thinking fast . . . watching every move. Lucille steers him up against the roulette wheel and the play gets under way. The Kid bets heavily right from the start. He wants to force Rosenthal's hand. The wheel begins to favor the Kid. He makes bigger and bigger bets . . . he is full of pep and seems more reckless than ever before. He now has a large stack of chips in front of him. A crowd begins to surround the table to watch the play. The Kid continues to win . . . he plunges heavier and heavier . . . the little ball always seems to favor him.

Rosenthal saunters casually up to the table in a disinterested manner. "You're running in great luck tonight, Kid," he says. "You don't know the half of it," the Kid replies as he rakes in another pile of chips. The crowd is now watching breathlessly . . . How long can his winning streak continue, they wonder. The Kid wonders, too . . . but he has a pretty good idea. Although apparently unconcerned *he is closely watching the pile of chips as they gather before him.* He is arranging them in stacks of $2,000 each. He estimates that he is now $20,000 to the good. He plunges in again . . . fortune continues with him . . . the rows of chips are mounting and mounting.

Rosenthal now saunters around behind the man at the wheel . . . the Kid watches him out of the corner of his eye. The crowd is now spellbound. The Kid hauls in another pile of winnings . . . he glances quickly at his stacks of chips . . . he is now about $25,000 to the good. Rosenthal pushes up to the wheel and picks up the ball. "You're too good tonight, Kid, guess I'll have to buck you myself for a while."

The big moment has come. The Kid abruptly arises, stops his playing, begins counting his chips. "That will be all for tonight, folks, the show is over," he announces. The crowd is taken by surprise. Rosenthal is stunned. He shoots a quick glance at Lucille. Lucille attempts to urge the Kid on. "Don't stop now, Kid. You're too lucky!" The Kid's whole manner has changed however . . . he is no longer the intoxicated playboy . . . he is in full command of the situation. He ignores Lucille . . . pushes the chips across the table at Rosenthal. "Cash in these chips—I'm through!" he says tersely to the gambler. Rosenthal is confused by the sudden turn of events. He stalls for time as Lucille continues in her efforts to coax the Kid to play. The Kid again insists that Rosenthal cash in his chips. The crowd senses that something appears to be wrong. Rosenthal realizes from the Kid's face that an embarrassing scene is imminent. He is furious but there is no way out. "Why, certainly, Kid," he says. "Just step over to my office—I haven't enough money at the table."

They go to the gambler's private quarters, followed by the bewildered Lucille. Rosenthal is enraged at the collapse of his plans, but he sees that he is in a tight place. Not only is he burned at the thought of losing so much money, but he is short on dough, he hasn't enough to pay the Kid. He calls the Kid a piker for quitting the game without giving the house a chance.

Then the Kid gives him a broadside. "Listen here, tinhorn!" he says. "You and your girl friend thought I was an all-around sap. You tried to play me for a chump—and instead you're winding up behind the eight ball yourself. It's the sucker that always pays, Rosenthal, and this time *you're* the sucker!" The Kid tells him that he knew from the start that the wheel was fixed . . . if Rosenthal wanted to let him win at first to the tune of $25,000, that was his lookout . . . there's no law against a guy quitting the game anytime he chooses . . . Rosenthal had simply made a sap out of *himself*.

The gambler's face darkens as he listens to the Kid and realizes that he has been outsmarted. He could commit murder. And he is not used to being talked to like that. For a moment there is a tense and dramatic situation as the two glare at each other. Then Rosenthal pulls himself together. He realizes that he is licked. He must find some other way out. He pretends friendliness . . . laughs . . . says that he's the first to admit it when he's outsmarted . . . he *did* pick the Kid for a setup but the Kid fooled him and turned out to be a wise guy . . . so he'll lay his cards on the table . . . he's shy on cash . . . he can't pay the Kid . . . but he'll give him a note.

The Kid refuses it. No notes for him. He wants something better for his money than that. If the gambler hasn't cash—then what has he got? Rosenthal is desperately trying to figure a way out. He doesn't want the Kid to squawk and have everything get into the papers. That would be the blowoff for the gambler. How about his racing stable? Maybe the Kid would go for that. He offers it to the Kid . . . tells him it is worth over $50,000 . . . and he will make an even trade if the Kid will call the whole roulette transaction off and say nothing about it. The Kid reflects on it . . . a racing stable . . . he'd thought of that before . . . it sounds good to him . . . all the toney folks go in for racing . . . even that classy dame, Diana Weston. "It's a go!" he says. The gambler makes him out a bill of sale. The Kid strides smilingly over to Lucille, "Thanks, darling, I've been trying to think of some way of getting rid of you—you've figured it all out for me." He then gives the gambler a parting shot, "All the wise guys aren't born in New York, Rosenthal, better go over your sucker list, maybe you'll find your own name on it."

Rosenthal glowers after the Kid . . . a smart alec, eh? Well, there's more than one way of roping those guys . . . he isn't through with the Kid yet. Nobody gets away with that stuff on Rosenthal.

Next morning the Kid is in his rooms being shaved . . . the barber is just putting on the lotion and finishing touches . . . the Kid is going through a copy of *The Spur* magazine. A picture of Diana Weston greets his eyes . . . she looks more stunning than ever . . . the Kid cannot get her off his mind. He is through with Lucille . . . new vistas lie before him . . . new worlds to conquer . . . He announces to George that they are going to move up the ladder a few pegs . . . they are going to move in new social circles.

The Kid sends for Freddie Schuyler, a newspaper acquaintance, who covers the town's social activities for the *Tribune.* While reduced in circumstances, Schuyler's family holds a high place in the social register, giving him entree to the best homes. Schuyler spends most of his time drowning his troubles and is always broke. The Kid says that he wants Schuyler to help him break into the social swim—he will pay Schuyler well for his time and trouble. It's a bargain with Schuyler . . . it will help him pay a few of his bills. He says that it won't be easy . . . but it can be done. Schuyler outlines his plan. The Kid will have to be given an impressive family tree, illustrious forbears. He will have to take over quarters on Park Avenue. This will be his "town house," and must contain some family heirlooms and antique furniture handed down through several generations. The Kid expostulates that he has none of these things. Schuyler laughs. Those little details will be taken care of by a friend of his who runs a prominent social bureau, and who for a fee attends to just such matters.

A few days later the Kid is established in his "town house," furnished with an assortment of "heirlooms" and "old family pieces"—collected from *various antique shops*. He also gets himself a coat of arms and before long Schuyler has pieces in the paper telling how the Kid is a descendant of "an old pioneer American family from the West."

The Kid dives head first into the social swim. Through Schuyler he meets Diana Weston. Diana is being hotly pursued by a very formal titled gent, the Count de Marquand, but the Kid brusquely pushes him aside, horns himself in and begins to monopolize Diana's time. He stages spectacular parties and unique dinners reminiscent of the Ward McAllister days, eclipsing anything the town has seen in years.

When the Kid learns that Diana has a weakness for jewelry, he works in on her from that angle. He showers her with rings and bracelets from Fifth Avenue's finest shops. She begins to think less of the Count and show more affection for the Kid. After all, the Kid not only has a winning personality and is much sought after by other women, but to Diana he is an immensely wealthy man who can give her everything she wants.

The Kid's proverbial luck again operates in regard to his newly acquired racing stable. With a new trainer, and free from the vicious practices of Rosenthal, his horses begin to win races. Also he has a two-year-old, *D'Artagnan*, who shows great promise and is entered for some of the important races. Rosenthal is more burned up than ever when he notes the Kid's success with the stable. He is determined to give the Kid a trimming, but realizes it will take more than one of the ordinary Broadway rackets to fool the Kid.

The Kid has fallen pretty hard for Diana—more so than for any other girl he has ever met. He feels that at last he has found *real* "class," the last word in feminine attainment. The

Kid always wanted the best. For the first time in his life he proposes marriage. But Diana is not so sure yet.

George is now tearing his hair out at the way the Kid is again spending money. He has worn out a couple of adding machines presenting facts and figures to the Kid, but to no avail. By virtue of a deal turned here or a deal turned there the Kid always seems to squeeze through somehow or other. His fame as a man of great wealth stalls off most of his creditors—they are afraid to offend him.

It is the knowledge of this fame and his propensity for entering into assorted deals that finally lead the Kid into a crisis. One day a couple of dignified, modest, and substantial businessmen call to see him. They are the Messrs. Horton and Cantwell. The Kid says he is too busy to see them. They send back word that they have a business proposition of the greatest importance to make to him. The Kid grants them an interview.

They state that they have a foolproof landing device, making possible the landing of all planes at a speed of 20 miles per hour. It is patented and has been approved by the government and leading authorities. They present documents and credentials to prove this. There is a great world market for such a device. They want the Kid to help promote it on a huge scale. The Kid realizes that there is a definite market for such an invention. With government indorsement it is a sure-fire proposition. But he is pressed for money. He tries to ease himself out by saying that he is "now tied up in so many deals that he doesn't care to invest in any new ones."

But he doesn't understand, they tell him. They don't want him to invest any money. They desire only the prestige of his being associated with the venture. With his name as an officer of the company they can raise all the necessary capital among prominent businessmen. They will cut him in on commissions and all profits. The Kid figures he hasn't anything to lose—and it might develop into a profitable deal just when he needs it. He agrees. The Kid doesn't know that the Messrs. Horton and Cantwell are *two of the slickest "con men" in the country*, imported by Rosenthal for the express purpose of taking him for a ride.

Diana's birthday is approaching. The Kid has spotted a swell necklace that he wants to give her, but he is wondering where the money is coming from to get it. The day before her birthday who should pop in on the Kid but the Messrs. Horton and Cantwell. They are making great progress on the airplane proposition. The Kid's association with the venture worked like magic, they tell him . . . already they have secured stock subscriptions from several leading businessmen . . . they show him a handful of checks . . . the venture is going to be a howling success. To make matters more convincing they tender the Kid a certified check for $10,000 . . . his share to date . . . and there will be more forthcoming, they tell him.

This is a windfall for the Kid. He can certainly use the money. He stages a grand party for Diana on her birthday. It is a swanky affair; many of the elite are in attendance. The Kid presents her with the necklace. He presses her again on matrimony. By now Diana has come to the conclusion that the Kid is acceptable as a husband. She consents. The Kid is elated. He enthusiastically outlines their future plans . . . what they will do after the ceremony . . . an estate on Long Island . . . a private yacht . . . , etc.

The Kid is now at the very height of jubilation. He is in the midst of preparations for his coming marriage to Diana . . . the airplane deal is paying him a substantial check every week . . . Everything looks rosy. *Then comes the bombshell!* One morning George brings in a telegram. The Kid tears it open. It is an unsigned wire with merely the two words on it: "*Good morning, sucker.*" The Kid is puzzled. He can't make it out. The Kid is just finishing breakfast when a detective arrives at the place. He flashes a badge on George and pushes in. He is from headquarters, working out of the bunko squad. The Kid will have to come along with him . . . the District Attorney wants to see him . . . it's about that aviation scheme of the Kid's!

Down at the District Attorney's office the Kid gets a severe jolt. He finds that the aviation deal was a huge swindle . . . The District Attorney accuses the Kid of being the brains behind the whole scheme. Several prominent businessmen have been gypped out of thousands of dollars, and yesterday the Messrs. Horton & Cantwell drew all funds from the bank, close to $100,000, and skipped out. The Kid was probably going to join them later for a split-up, the D.A. charges.

The Kid protests that he had no knowledge the deal was a swindle—he thought it was a legitimate business venture. The D.A. doesn't believe him . . . the Kid was president of the concern wasn't he? The Kid says this was merely an honorary office . . . he had nothing to do with the actual operation of the company . . . Oh, Yeah? says the D.A. . . . then how about all the money he drew from the firm? The D.A. pulls forth several checks, all cashed and indorsed by the Kid!

It looks bad for the Kid. He admits he received the money, but he believed everything was straightforward . . . the airplane device had been indorsed by the government . . . several firms had placed large orders. The D.A. informs him that these were all forgeries . . . several big businessmen have been swindled by the transaction . . . the Kid has made himself a party to the fraud by taking the firm's funds and allowing the use of his name . . . Detectives have been unable to find Horton and Cantwell . . . so the District Attorney will have to ask for an immediate indictment against the Kid.

The Kid sees that he is the goat. He has implicated himself by cashing the checks. While he has always had a bit of the Barnum about him, the Kid has never been crooked or dishonest. He wants to keep his name clean. He realizes that an indictment against him will spell the end of "The Million Dollar Kid." There is only one way out. It will be a tough assignment—but it is his lone hope . . . "Suppose," he asks the District Attorney, "that those who bought stock in this proposition are paid back every cent they invested, would that clear me, and prove that I had no intention of being a party to this swindle?"

Such a move, the D.A. says, would indicate the Kid's honesty and well meaning in the matter, and it is highly probable that the men who bought stock on the strength of the Kid's name would exonerate him from all blame. But the law cannot be fooled with or delayed in this matter. The D.A. says that he will give the Kid just 48 hours to make good this pledge—otherwise an indictment will be drawn against him at once. The Kid agrees.

Over $100,000 to be raised in 48 hours! The Kid and George start on a mad scramble to raise the money. Where and how they don't know. The Kid will have to sell everything he owns. He snaps orders left and right to George. Two of his cars must go . . . they will hold on to one, payments are due on it anyway. There are several expensive diamond rings, watches, jeweled cuff links, etc., which will net a few thousand. He can dispose of his interest in a night club, also a musical comedy he has backed. These will bring in substantial amounts, but not nearly enough.

His racing stable! The Kid almost forgot that. But where can he sell this on a fast action deal without exposing himself? Nick Rosenthal! The gambler might buy it back if he happens to be flush with dough . . . the stable is now in good form. The Kid pays a quick visit to Rosenthal. He offers to sell him back his racing stable at a bargain, but it must be for spot cash. The gambler is suave, and there is a cunning gleam in his eye. Sure, he might buy it back, *he just made a nice "killing,"* he tells the Kid. "Not in any trouble are you, Kid?" Rosenthal asks insinuatingly. He tells the Kid he will give him $15,000 cash for the Stable, no more and no less. It is a steal at that price, but the Kid has no time to argue. He accepts. The deal is closed.

Rosenthal goes to the safe and gives the Kid the $15,000. "By the way," the gambler asks mockingly, as the Kid is leaving. "How is that aviation deal of yours coming along? Let me know if you have any more stock to sell. I might want to get in on some of that easy money." The Kid shoots a quick glance at Rosenthal as he goes out of the door. Does the gambler know anything, the Kid wonders?

Thirty-six hours have passed. The Kid and George have disposed of every possible asset . . . they have scraped up every possible dollar. The Kid is at the end of his rope . . . and he is still shy over $20,000. In the meantime the Kid has been stalling off on an appointment with Diana. She has been going forward with her wedding plans. The Kid has hated to tell her the bad news. He can't hold off any longer. She will have to know sooner or later. He drives with George to her apartment.

The Kid comes out bluntly and tells Diana the facts . . . he has met certain financial reverses . . . he is pressed for money at the present time . . . it probably won't be for long . . . in a few months he will be back on top again. In the meantime, however, they will have to alter some of their plans. It will be necessary for them to have a quiet wedding, postpone on lavish entertainments, and hold down on expenses until he gets on his feet.

This doesn't click at all with Diana. She is not only keenly disappointed, but highly indignant. It makes a fool out of her among her friends, she says . . . especially after all she had planned and counted on. Besides, if the Kid thinks that she is going to settle down and live a quiet home life waiting for him to get back in the money, why he's crazy! How about the Long Island estate and the private yacht they were to have. She's not going to live like a piker!!

It won't be as bad as that, the Kid tells her. They will live well . . . they will put up a good front . . . nobody will know the difference. But he had to tell her the truth. Diana is cold and condescending now. *Put on a good front!* . . . Sure! . . . She sees it all now . . . That's all he ever has done, put on a front . . . he pretended he had millions—but he is just a bluff . . . a four-flusher . . . a pretender. Diana tells him their wedding is off, she is through with him. However, she sneeringly adds, *he was* a good spender while he had it . . . she thanks him for all the nice jewelry and presents . . . it will be something for her to remember him by.

This is too much for the Kid. So, she's just another dame, trying to play him for a sap! No one ever got away with that *on him*. He hadn't thought of the jewelry. And there she is, dressed up like Lady Astor's pet horse . . . laughing at him . . . with a small fortune of *his* jewelry draping her fingers, arms and neck . . . while he has been sweating and wondering where he was going to get the balance of the money to keep himself out of jail!

It's the Kid's turn to get tough now. He tells Diana the jewelry is going back where it came from. Diana laughs at him . . . tells him that no gentleman ever asks for the return of gifts. The Kid says she can tell that to the Count de Marquand . . . but *his* gifts *are* going to be returned. The Kid knows how to handle these ritzy dames. He grabs hold of Diana, throws her down on a divan, and begins to take the jewelry away from her by force. They roll off the divan and around the floor as the Kid proceeds to take rings, bracelets, and necklaces off Diana and stuff them in his pocket. A butler hears Diana's screams . . . he comes rushing in . . . but George, who has been listening excitedly in the waiting room, connects a right-hand wallop with the butler's chin and knocks him for a goal. The Kid completes the job by standing Diana on her head while he takes a $2,000 diamond anklet off her leg . . . then he slams a couple of pillows over her head and exits with George.

They ride down the apartment elevator and out to the Kid's waiting car. In the excitement the Kid hasn't noticed George, who is garbed in one of *Diana's expensive fur coats*, and is bulging all over like a Chinese magician. As they ride along the boulevard George pulls from under the fur coat a silver serving set, a miniature radio, and a Pekinese dog. "I thought we might as well make a good job of rounding up your presents while we were at it," he explains to the Kid.

With the extra money raised through the sale of Diana's jewelry the Kid is just able to scrape together enough money to cover all amounts due those who were swindled in the airplane scheme. The District Attorney gives him a clean bill of health. He also tells the Kid that through fingerprints left in the office, they have ferreted out the real identity of the Messrs. Horton & Cantwell. He believes they are members of a gang working in cahoots with Nick Rosenthal. They may make an arrest at any moment. The Kid begins to see the light. He gives the D.A. the lowdown on his experiences with Rosenthal. That clinches it with the D.A.

But the Kid is now flat broke. Everything has crashed down about him. The bill at their apartment hotel is overdue. He has sacrificed two of his cars, and the finance company is coming to take his town car away from him tomorrow. He also owed the chauffeur a week's pay. George, with an additional stack of bills, is bemoaning their plight. "We're washed up! I told you this would happen, Charlie. We owe everybody, the hotel will probably put us out, and after tomorrow we won't even have a car. We're sunk!"

The Kid is nervously pacing up and down. "Listen," he says to George. "We may be broke—*but nobody knows it yet!* They still *think* I'm a millionaire . . . and until they do find out differently . . . *I am a millionaire!* . . . Watch this!"

The Kid strides over to the telephone and asks for the order desk. He proceeds to order a luncheon fit for a king, everything on the menu from soup to nuts, with wines, champagnes, and a box of Perfectos thrown in for good measure. George listens in amazement. *But they can't go on this way,* George persists . . . they will only sink further into the hole!

And now George springs a surprise. He has known all along, he says, that the Kid's extravagance would put him on the rocks . . . he knew that someday they would be stranded. And penny-pinching George has been salting away dimes and dollars to meet just such an emergency. He has saved, he informs the Kid, the sum of $1,000! And George goes to a tin cashbox and draws forth a huge roll of bills. It is the $1,000 . . . *all in one dollar bills!* This, he says, insures their safe return home. Now they can go back to Allentown where they belong.

The Kid's eyes pop when he sees the money! His face lights up, he ignores George's remarks. All he can see is $1,000 in cash staring him in the face. He is alert, all action again. Return to Allentown, with $1,000 in hand? George is nuts . . . the Kid begins to snap out orders . . . *they are going to the races!* . . . the big Futurity stakes are being run today . . . D'Artagnan, the two-year-old in his former stable is entered in the race . . . he can't lose! George bellows a roar of protest . . . they'll lose the $1,000 sure . . . this is no time for gambling . . . he saved that money to go home on!!!

The Kid is oblivious to George . . . they're going to the races . . . and they're going in style while they still have the use of the car . . . it's all or nothing with the Kid! He grabs his hat and coat . . . they just have time to get to the track in time for the Futurity. "And by the way," he tells George, "run downstairs and get that roll of chicken feed changed into a $1,000 bill—I never did like those piker one-dollar bills!"

The Kid and George arrive at the track. It is a gala day . . . the Club is thronged with celebrities. Nick Rosenthal is on hand . . . he doesn't notice two headquarters men who have been trailing him . . . they tap him on the shoulder . . . they have a warrant for his arrest . . . the gambler says he still has some bets to make, will they wait until after the Futurity? . . . They tell him O.K., but they'll stick with him.

They are lining up for the Futurity . . . the horses are coming out of the paddock. There is a *gorgeous-looking dame* sitting in a front box at the clubhouse. The Kid notices her as he buys an entry program and hurries toward the rail . . . she is a knockout . . . the Kid stares admiringly at her . . . their eyes meet as the Kid passes by the box . . . she has recognized him . . . he gets a smile from her. "*I'd sure like to buy that,*" he declares to George, "but it looks expensive."

Quickly the Kid heads for the rail and surveys the big board near the judges' stand, listing the entries and the odds. D'Artagnan has been backed down to even money, and is now the favorite! Heavy betting on the part of Rosenthal and his clique has been responsible. This is a blow to the Kid. He had counted on better odds. There's no hope of a cleanup for him in an even-money bet.

The siren sounds, giving only one minute in which to place bets . . . the Kid does not know what to do . . . his eyes wander further down the entry list . . . suddenly he gives a start . . . can he believe his eyes! . . . The last horse in the entry list is named *Jasper!* "Look, George," he exclaims, "Jasper! It's a hunch!" But George doesn't believe in hunches . . . the horse is a long shot . . . he hasn't a chance. The Kid flashes a quick look at the money board. *Jasper is paying* 50 *to* 1 *in the odds.* "I'm betting on Uncle Jasper," he announces, "it's our only chance!"

The Kid tears over to the mutuals just as the man is pulling down the window. He slams the $1,000 bill down. "Shoot the whole works on Jasper . . . on the nose!" he cries. He gets his ticket and rushes back to a vantage point by the rail just as the starter flips the barrier. The horses are off! The Kid has his field glasses on them as they head for the first turn.

Through the Kid's field glasses we see one horse rush out ahead of the others and take the lead . . . we hear voices from the crowd shouting, "Jasper is in front!" Through the Kid's glasses we follow the horses around the track . . . Jasper keeps gaining . . . he is leaving the rest of the horses behind . . . "It's a runaway for Jasper!" we hear the crowd yelling . . . The Kid's glasses are still focused on the horses and as Jasper takes an even more commanding lead as they come into the home stretch, his glasses slowly leave the horses and in a *panoramic shot* sweep away from the track, over the crowd, and finally focus themselves on the *gorgeous dame in the front box of the clubhouse.* The Kid is no longer worried about the outcome of the race . . . the $50,000 is already in his pocket as far as he is concerned . . . he is now interested in other matters. As the glasses continue to remain focused on the gorgeous dame, we *hear* the wild tumult of the crowd roaring "*Jasper Wins!*" The Kid has clicked. *He is in the money again!*

QUICK WIPE TO:

Interior shot of the Kid's town car as it whirls along a country road on the way back from the races. George is sitting in the front seat with the chauffeur. Inside, reclining nonchalantly on the back seat is the Kid. *At his side is the gorgeous dame.* The Kid, serene, cocky, and debonair, is again the millionaire playboy in every word and gesture. They are drinking a couple of highballs that the Kid has mixed from his private buffet. The Kid is speaking to the gorgeous dame. "Now," he confides, "we will start the evening off with dinner at the Plaza . . . after that to the opening of the Follies . . . then to the Mayfair Club until about 3 A.M. for dancing, champagne, and a midnight sup . . . and from 3 A.M. on . . ." The Kid looks insinuatingly at the gorgeous dame . . . "Well, from 3 A.M. on . . . *who knows?*"

FADE-OUT

CHAPTER XIX

The Treatment or Adaptation

FUNDAMENTALLY, a treatment and an adaptation are much the same thing. They differ only as to details. The term *adaptation* is applied to a written screen version of a stage play, novel, or short story. It is often necessary to make drastic changes in bringing a novel or play to the screen. This calls for a *screen version*, or *adaptation*.

The term *treatment* is more loosely used in the studios. Sometimes when a novel or play is purchased by a studio it is turned over to a writer, who is told to "make a treatment of it"; in other words to prepare on paper an outline of how this particular novel or play could best be adapted to the screen.

Generally speaking, however, a treatment is a suggested detailed outline for the best manner of presenting a story on the screen, regardless of whether the story is an original photoplay manuscript, a novel, or a stage play.

The treatment is prepared after the story has been purchased and before it is finally put into continuity form. (Occasionally a suggested treatment of a novel or play is made before purchase.) Sometimes several studio writers are handed a copy of the same story and each is told to make a treatment of it. The producer then selects the treatment he considers best, or uses a blend of all of them.

The specimen treatment presented here, of *Roar of the Dragon*, was written by Howard Estabrook for RKO-Radio, and is from an original story. Mr. Estabrook is one of the ablest and highest paid scenarists in the film industry. He engages in every type of screen writing, and some of the finest screen plays of the cinema have come from his typewriter.

It will be noted that Mr. Estabrook's treatment is written in informal, staccato style. This is because it is meant only as a suggested outline of action, subject to change before the *continuity* is embarked upon; those for whom this treatment was prepared were already largely familiar with the story by virtue of production conferences.

Securing the right treatment in the film presentation of a story goes a long way toward its success on the screen. For that reason it is one of the best paying branches of the screen-writing craft.

A Treatment
on
ROAR OF THE DRAGON

By Howard Estabrook (for RKO Studio)

Characters

Chinese Refugees. Fleeing for their lives from the night attack of the Bandits on the Chinese city. Shown in brief flashes.

Chinese Bandits. Lawless destroyers, at war with everyone, including their own government—their objectives are loot, pillage, and capture for ransom—they inflict horrible tortures on prisoners to create terror and insure quick payment of heavy ransoms.

Fielding. A wanderer (Richard Dix). Ne'er-do-well American, a natural rolling stone who has traveled over most of the world—a drifter, almost useless in times of peace, but in a sudden emergency he becomes the man of the hour, displaying amazing courage, authority, and humor. As soon as the danger passes, his importance fades, he is nobody again, but his meeting with Virginia has changed everything and you know he will now become somebody.

Johnson. American oil man—soft-fleshed and potbellied—a wealthy independent oil operator, whose business is obtaining concessions in China—he has a large sum of cash money with him, and heavy deposits in San Francisco. He has employed Fielding to travel with him. At the opening of the story decides he is useless and discharges him, but soon is begging him for help and safety.

Sau Chung. Johnson's Chinese "boy" servant.

Virginia Maynard (Irene Dunne type). American—traveling in the Orient with her family, including her father, whose business is in Harbin, and her mother, eccentric and helpless.

American Woman. Wife of commercial attaché.

The Jew (George Stone type). Shopkeeper—aged and infirm—his courage and self-sacrifice take him to a horrible death.

"Dollar" Bradwick. American profiteer—unprincipled and dangerous, preying upon his fellow man—selling dope, but principally trafficking in arms and munitions which he secretly sells to the Chinese Bandits.

Vasili. His henchman, an Asiatic mongrel of degraded type.

Moon Toy. Mysterious Chinese girl (Anna May Wong type). Played as a mystery personage throughout until her real motive is disclosed. In love with Bradwick, but during the siege, she realizes his traitorous nature and betrays him, loyal to her fellow prisoners, transferring her affections to Fielding, even though this is hopeless for her.

Miss Patricia Abercrombie. American spinster schoolteacher (Edna May Oliver type). Head of a mission school, educating a flock of Chinese children whom she herds around like sheep. She is alternately terror stricken, dictatorial, dazed, and futile—but keeps up a flow of caustic chatter and occasionally has a useful idea.

Chinese Children. Selection of amusing types, doll-faced, dressed in quaint Chinese costumes.

MacDunn. Comedy dumbbell (Charles Butterworth type). American clerk in hotel—during the siege he is everywhere, grotesque, absurd but occasionally useful—he does many odd jobs such as sentry duty and guard over the goat. He is constantly surprised at himself, especially when he kills bandits.

Hortense O'Dare. American café girl singer (Arline Judge type). Slangy and amusing—even the siege does not disturb her whimsical, sophisticated slant toward life—she works to keep everyone in good humor, milks the goat, feeds the Chinese children, sings a song—a Bandit bullet kills her.

Stefano. Italian musician—saves his accordion in the night rush to escape the Bandits—he also sings in his own peculiar way.

Badozhskoi. Russian—a bombastic theorist, expounding futile theories regarding what's wrong with the world.

Sister Marie Victoire. French Franciscan nun—who ministers to the wounded and dying and prays during the siege.

Prausnitz. German doctor (Bill Orlamond type).

Chinese Troops. National Army Cavalry.

Chinese Officer. Fine type, in command of cavalry.

Ragged Chinaman. Bandit who enters compound disguised as Refugee, in night helps other Bandits into compound, is killed by Refugees.

A Dog.

A Bird (trained crow).

ROAR OF THE DRAGON

Structural Outline

Locale: Northern Manchuria, an imaginary town, presumably between Wulakai and Taoan, in a bandit-infested area.
Time: Today.

Dynamic music—blaring gong—

Main and credit titles—

Behind titles—impressive painting of menacing Chinese dragon, continuing through—

Introductory title—referring to murderous Bandits, disowned alike by China and Russia, mongrel scourge of the borders, raiding the remote Manchurian frontier—comparing them to the Bandits of our own frontier days—making clear their authenticity, also that the Chinese Government has placed a price on their heads.

Another title—referring to busy Chinese city of interior Manchuria, free thus far from Bandit raids.

During second title, music and dragon fade—

Dissolve to:

Night vista of town (composite, scene and process)—

Brief dissolves of interesting street atmosphere at night—movement and color (stock film)—

Interior of small hotel—lobby—restaurant—barroom—Mixed types—Chinese, American, Europeans—Sound of music in restaurant—accordion (played by Italian musician, Stefano) and voice of Café Singer (Hortense O'Dare)—

Johnson, American potbellied Oil Man, walking through lobby looking for someone—

Pan with him to hotel desk. He confronts shrinking, spectacled American clerk, MacDunn (Charles Butterworth) and asks if he knows where Fielding is—

MacDunn replies that he's not a magician and he'd have to be to keep track of Fielding—

The Chinese proprietor near by comments in vivid Chinese indicating he doesn't think much of Fielding either—Johnson grunts disgusted agreement—

Pan with Johnson to restaurant—

Hortense O'Dare (Arline Judge) finishes song—

Johnson sees at table "Dollar" Bradwick, American profiteer (Henry Gordon), and Moon Toy, mysterious Chinese girl, strikingly dressed (Anna May Wong)—

Johnson greets Bradwick and asks if he has seen Fielding—

Bradwick replies that he was headed in the general direction of the bar—

Johnson, disgusted, thanks him, *exits* toward bar—

Bradwick remarks that Johnson is important American oil man—plenty of money—

Moon Toy registers this significantly and asks about Fielding—

Bradwick says he is no good—terrible—a drifter—has been working for Johnson, but never stays anywhere long.

In the noisy barroom, amid a hilarious crowd, drinking and singing, Johnson finds his employee Fielding (Richard Dix) carousing at bar with noisy companions—

Johnson angrily denounces the tipsy Fielding, declaring that he is no good at any price, railing at him for not attending to business, discharging him on the spot—

Fielding accepts the discharge with an indifferent jest—The incident has caused a lull in the noise—

Sudden sound of distant shooting—excitement spreads swiftly through hotel—

Exterior of the hotel—night vista of town—distant burning buildings—sound of rifle fire—new buildings flare up, sparks blown high by the breeze (no explosions—nothing indicating grenades or shell fire).

Commotion in front of hotel—Sau Chung, Johnson's wild-eyed Chinese "boy" servant of indefinite age, rushes into hotel.

In lobby, Sau Chung encounters his master, Johnson, breathlessly tells him that Bandits are attacking the town, robbing, killing "little people," holding "big people" for ransom—

Johnson is frantic at the mention of "big people" for ransom—that means him—he instantly goes yellow and terror stricken, gasps for Fielding, and rushes into

Barroom—Fielding still at bar, indifferent to the hubbub—

Johnson begs Fielding for help—asks what to do—

Fielding is amused, says don't get excited—there's liable to be some fun, but the safest place for them is inside the walls of the Whang-Fo Compound of the American Commercial Attaché—Fielding leads the way—Johnson and Sau Chung follow him.

Exterior of the hotel—pandemonium—everybody rushing helter-skelter for safety in every direction—

Fielding comes out of hotel, followed by Johnson and Sau Chung—he knows exactly where he is going and leads the way, in contrast to the helter-skelter scrambling in all directions of others—

In the street, amid fleeing Refugees, Fielding, Johnson, and Sau Chung hurrying along—

A series of fast dissolves—

Fielding, with superior speed, becomes separated from Johnson and Sau Chung—

Fielding rushes through rapid dissolves—Chinese Refugees running in flight from burning areas—terror stricken—carrying household possessions, bedding, heavy bundles, pots and pans, bird cages, chickens—White tourists escaping in jinrikishas swiftly pulled by coolies—other white Refugees running on foot—wailing Chinese mothers carrying babies on backs—sobbing children in wheelbarrow—old Chinese women hobbling painfully on bound feet—pitiful sights—members of families separated, crying out for each other—unseen bullet kills husband—frantic wife and children try to drag him but are forced to give up and hurry on—

Fielding, alone, passing a building, hears shrieks of a girl's voice—he pauses, rushes around corner—

Fielding finds American girl, Virginia Maynard, struggling with lone Chinese Bandit who sees Fielding, shoots at him, and disappears—

Fielding, unhurt, assists Virginia—her father and mother rush frantically in—Fielding yells to come with him to Whang-Fo Compound—he leads the way—they follow—

In the street—fleeing Chinese Refugees running helter-skelter in all directions—Fielding is guiding Virginia and her father and mother toward compound—they are passing

Entrance with sign "Manchuria Mission School"—out of entrance pours a stream of fifteen Chinese children, round faced, terror stricken, herded like sheep by the American spinster teacher, Miss Patricia Abercrombie (Edna May Oliver)—who yells at the welcome sight of other Americans—Fielding tells her to come along—they all hurry on—

Another section nearer burning areas—Bandits and Chinese Refugees—scenes of violence—murderous assaults by Bandits—fiendish killings—Bandits robbing Refugees—pillaging and burning buildings—

The little shop of an old Jew (George Stone) is pillaged—he barely escapes with his life and flees, wounded—(the foregoing principally in intimate short flashes, creating background of horror for entire picture).

At the walled compound, panic-stricken Chinese Refugees of all ages are rushing on through the main gate—In charge of the compound is the American wife of the Commercial Attaché—she frantically tries to inspect everyone who goes in, fearful of admitting any dangerous characters, repeatedly declaring that her husband is away, but she will do her best.

Fielding and his party arrive at compound—the Attaché's wife admits them through the gate—Virginia takes her father and mother inside—Miss Abercrombie herds the flock of Chinese children in like sheep—

Among others who arrive are:

"Dollar" Bradwick and Moon Toy—
Vasili, Bradwick's henchman, an Asiatic mongrel—
MacDunn and Hortense O'Dare—
Stefano, with his accordion—

Others already inside are:
Sister Marie Victoire—
Bradozhskoi, Russian agitator—
Prausnitz, German doctor—

The Whang-Fo Compound is a spacious area enclosed by masonry walls surmounted by sharp iron grille—the main entrance in wall has barred iron gates now held open admitting Refugees.

Inside the compound (formerly the home of a wealthy Chinaman)—buildings with picturesque Chinese effect, varied outline and odd angles, including living quarters, service quarters, and offices—the rest of the enclosed compound is paved courtyard and gardens—in the side wall is a *small* heavy wooden door now closed and barred—

Fielding has remained at the gate to look for Johnson and Sau Chung—suddenly Johnson drags himself into sight, alone, fatigued to a frazzle and frightened half to death, breathlessly telling that he barely escaped from the Bandits who grabbed Sau Chung and dragged him away a prisoner—

Fielding instantly orders the wife of the Attaché to shut the gates—Bandits are too close—She is surprised at his assumption of authority, but realizes he is right, and gives orders to her Chinese servants, who shut the gates.

In the compound everything is in uproar and confusion—frightened Chinese are jabbering—other characters are telling their experiences in escaping—Miss Abercrombie bossing the Chinese children around, trying to quiet their fears and keep them out of mischief—Moon Toy helps her—Miss Abercrombie makes caustic remarks about the general situation—

Virginia is somewhat dazed at the close contact with the mixed Refugees and holds herself aloof—she is noticeably snobbish toward Hortense O'Dare, the Café girl singer, who is lending a helpful hand whenever she can, wisecracking to keep up the spirits of the others—Fielding observes Virginia's aloofness, but says nothing—

(Sound of scattered Bandit rifle fire has been heard intermittently during all of the foregoing action, and continues irregularly throughout with occasional definite lulls.)

Johnson, the oil man, whose money and position obviously rank him as the most important person present in the eyes of everyone, receives considerable sycophantic attention, but is entirely lacking in anything like real leadership—

Fielding instantly sees that the confusion and lack of order are extremely dangerous, imperiling the lives of everyone, as Bandit bullets continue to strike occasionally in the compound—

Fielding calls the principal characters together and notifies them that organization is necessary for their safety—martial law—he will take charge—his authority is immediately questioned and disputed by Bradwick and his henchman Vasili, but Fielding demonstrates that he has been through things like this before and carries his point—he takes charge (under the stress of action, Fielding has changed entirely from the idling roisterer first seen in the hotel bar—he is becoming a new man of force, decision, and action)—

Virginia watches him, unable to decide just what sort of man he is—Moon Toy admires him—

Fielding asks the Attaché's wife if there are any arms or ammunition—she is relieved to have someone take the initiative, and shows him a good supply of rifles, revolvers, and ammunition, including several small machine guns—Fielding instructs MacDunn to bring out the arms and ammunition—MacDunn, somewhat alarmed, proceeds to obey—Bradwick looks over the arms with experienced eye—

Bradwick talks privately with his henchman, Vasili, wondering if these Bandits are the ones to whom he has sold ammunition—if so, the fact may protect him—he picks up a spent Bandit bullet from the ground and studies it—Moon Toy strolls near, curiously observant but silent—

Fielding apportions the arms and ammunition among the men—gives orders—assigns guard duties—posting a twenty-four-hour guard with machine guns in the square tower above the house, from which the sentry can overlook the walls on every side—

Sound of a wailing cry at the front gate—Fielding rushes to gate, followed by others, and finds an aged Jewish shopkeeper

(George Stone type) begging for admittance—he is physically infirm and has been wounded by the Bandits—Johnson is suspicious, unwilling to admit anybody, now that he is inside—but Fielding instantly orders the gates opened to admit the fugitive—the Jew sinks down and breathlessly tells that his shop has been pillaged and burned by the Bandits, his money stolen—he himself has barely escaped with his life—the French Franciscan nun takes him inside to attend to his wound—

Johnson is terrified and chiefly concerned about the safety of a large sum of money which he has on his person. Reference to the money is overheard by Bradwick and Vasili—they show a sinister interest and decide to make an attempt to get the money later—

Fielding is busy inspecting the food supply—to his dismay, he finds that the food is not sufficient to last more than a few days—he places the food under lock and key and immediately puts everyone on half rations, arousing protests from the selfish ones, whom he ignores—

He puts Dr. Praunsnitz in strict charge of the food, and the faithful old German obeys him to the letter—Fielding also orders the one milk goat in the compound to be reserved exclusively for supplying milk to the children (which gives them about one cup each per day)—he puts MacDunn on guard with a rifle, pacing back and forth as a sentry before the goat—

MacDunn considers this an indignity, but obeys, muttering that this is the first time he ever had to be chambermaid to a goat (later he gradually makes friends with the goat, discovers that she is pretty smart, eating only the best flowers in the garden—he calls her "Dora")—Fielding also instructs MacDunn to keep an eye on the small door in the side wall—

Hortense O'Dare, the Café girl singer, volunteers to milk the goat and does so, then assists Miss Abercrombie in feeding the Chinese children. Johnson selfishly considers this a waste of good milk.

Fielding finds Virginia idle, gives her instructions regarding the work she is to do—to her surprise, she enjoys being ordered about by Fielding and obeys—

Bradwick is seen talking confidentially to Hortense, who listens, studying him in quiet amazement, then slaps his face and walks away—

Brief time elapse—

The half rationing is getting on everyone's nerves—the food situation causes conflicts and sacrifices—Virginia notices that the feeble old Jew has given his food to others who are sick—he is growing weaker—

Moon Toy shares her food with the Jew—Virginia sees this and presently comes down from her aloofness and offers to share her food with others weaker than she—Hortense looks Virginia over in some surprise at her changed attitude—

MacDunn has managed to repair the radio—a broadcast comes in, warning citizens to look out for Bandits—there is danger—MacDunn satirically replies to the radio—and switches the station—an international broadcast comes in, describing a ball game in United States—

Excitement within the compound as cries are heard outside the small wooden door in the side wall—Fielding and Johnson recognize the voice of Sau Chung—Fielding gives orders to MacDunn who opens the door to admit him—

Sau Chung staggers in, tattered and torn, weak from terror —and gasps that he has just been released by the Bandits with a message warning the Refugees that they will be tortured to death as soon as captured unless they surrender at once to be held for ransom—

Fielding sharply declares there will be no surrender on any terms—the Bandits cannot be trusted and would kill most of them anyway—

The potbellied Johnson is in a weak frenzy of fear, realizing, through Sau Chung's message, that the Bandits want him for his wealth and will torture him unless a huge ransom is paid— he groans in agony—Fielding ignores him and orders Sau Chung to go inside and get food and rest—He obeys—

Inside—Miss Abercrombie, apprehensive, is on guard with a large bamboo stick—and as Sau Chung enters, tattered and torn, she jumps to the conclusion that he is a Bandit and socks him over the head with the bamboo stick—Sau Chung bleats out in broken English—she realizes her mistake and demands to know why he didn't say so in the first place—She takes him in to get food—

During a lull in the shooting, Miss Abercrombie has her hands full with the flock of Chinese Children, preventing them from battling with each other and taking each others' food—to keep her mind off the siege she tries to teach them their lessons, and here we get a touch of the beauty of the philosophy of Confucius—Miss Abercrombie can't quite remember the quotation—Moon Toy assists her by speaking the phrase correctly—

Hortense gets the idea, but the children fail to appreciate it and squall—Hortense volunteers to try to quiet the children and sings a song—she is accompanied by the Italian, playing his accordion—the Chinese children are fascinated by the American jazz melody—

In the midst of the song comes the rattle of a fusillade of Bandit bullets, one of which strikes Hortense and lays her low—the Nun holds Hortense in her arms, and Virginia now completely abandons her aloofness and helps staunch the blood from Hortense's wound, as the Nun murmurs a prayer over the dying girl—Hortense dies—

Fielding in a rage gives sharp orders—his instructions have been disobeyed, which has resulted in Hortense getting beyond the line of safety and being shot—he forbids anyone to go beyond certain points—his hot dominance in the emergency stirs Virginia—she is becoming fascinated by this dictator who rules by personal force of character.

Brief time elapse—

The feeble old Jew realizes that the food supplies are getting dangerously low—he tells Fielding that he is not only useless in defense, but is another mouth to feed—Fielding reproves him and tells him that it's share and share alike for everyone and he must quit starving himself, as he is just as much entitled to food as anyone, Johnson included—in fact, a little more so than Johnson, whose waistline indicates that he is about two years ahead with his meals—

The Jew is grateful, but insists upon telling Fielding an idea—in his shop he had a little food supply which he thinks the Bandits may have overlooked in pillaging the place—he describes the location of the shop to Fielding and begs his permission to go out and get the food—Fielding roars out a refusal, declaring that would be certain death, and gives the Jew positive orders to keep within the safety area of the compound—

Fielding speculates on their slim chances for rescue hoping that the Chinese authorities may learn of the raid in time to send help—The old Jew listens—realizing that if he could get the food in his shop it would help the Refugees hold out longer—unnoticed by the others the Jew quietly slips out the door in the wall—his absence is discovered—efforts are made to call him back, but it is too late—

Fielding realizes the awful peril into which the brave little Jew has gone—Johnson says maybe he'll get the food—Fielding furiously rebukes him and contrasts his behavior with that of the Jew—Fielding rushes up to the second-floor window—a risky position where he can see over the walls into the Bandit lines but is exposed to their bullets—others follow including Sau Chung and Johnson—they anxiously watch for the Jew—

Sound of shouting is heard from the Bandit lines—Sau Chung listens and cries out that the Jew is caught—All are horror-struck as flames are seen and the Jew's body is lifted on a pole, soaked with oil and burning—Johnson hysterically declares that's what the Bandits will do to him unless they get a big ransom—Fielding ignores him—slowly they descend to the lower floor—all are horror-struck at the Jew's awful fate—

Brief time elapse.

Johnson still bemoans his fate, fearing the loss of the money he has on him—Bradwick and his henchman, Vasili, see their chance to get the money from Johnson without his knowledge—they cautiously start to make the attempt.

Fielding finds Virginia engaged in some backbreaking menial labor which she has undertaken on her own initiative—he helps her—it is evident that he is falling in love with her, but conceals it because of the apparent social gulf between them, vaguely feeling that he cannot win her—She is grateful for his help and is somehow glad to be near him—

Bradwick and Vasili have stolen Johnson's money and secret themselves to divide it—Vasili demands an equal share, which Bradwick denies—they fight over the money with the desperation of men who may be doomed anyway—Bradwick draws a knife, murders Vasili, and conceals his body, then strolls calmly into the house, meeting Moon Toy—he does not know whether she suspects the murder or not—

Johnson discovers the loss of his money, howls with dismay and demands help—he craftily says they might have used the money to buy off the Bandits—he demands a search of everyone to recover it—Fielding starts to investigate—an interruption as—MacDunn hastily enters in great alarm and reports to Fielding that there is a mysterious sound at the door in the side wall—Fielding hurries out, followed by MacDunn and the others.

They cautiously approach the door in the wall and listen—a scratching sound can plainly be heard—they whisper among themselves, wondering if the Bandits are trying to undermine the wall or possibly planting a bomb—they listen again and now hear a weird howling sound—Fielding suspects something and orders the others to lift him up over the wall—they protest at the danger to him, but obey—Fielding looks down outside, grunts, drops down, and orders the door opened, admitting a frightened, homeless dog seeking refuge.

The dog soon becomes a great favorite with the Chinese children and hungrily eats the scraps of bones they give him.

The dog's famished condition, chewing on bones, gives a theme to Bradozhskoi, the Russian Agitator, who makes a red-fire speech, comparing them all to dogs, saying the world must be reformed and he will show them how to do it. A sudden fusillade of Bandit fire—he runs for shelter, having unintentionally gotten beyond the safety lines—MacDunn says that now they'll never know how to fix the world—

Outside the front gates, a ragged Chinese Refugee is seen through the bars, begging pitifully for admittance, apparently in danger of being killed at any moment by Bandit bullets—The kindly, well-meaning Dr. Prausnitz takes pity on the Chinaman, opens the gates and admits him—they hurry to the shelter of the house.

Inside the house, Fielding discovers that Dr. Prausnitz has admitted the Chinaman and sharply warns him never to do such a thing in the future without permission—Fielding orders that the ragged Chinaman be kept in this room until further instructions—

During a fusillade from the Bandits, a black object zips in through the window past MacDunn's head—he yells, Look out—a bomb! but the black object proves to be a crow which has flown in seeking refuge from the rifle fire (the crow remains and later makes friends with the dog, riding around on his back, to the great amusement of the Chinese children)—

Scattered firing from the Bandits continues until night, when it gradually stops—

Late at night, all are sleeping except the few on guard duty—in another part of the house, Fielding, struggling against terrific fatigue, is snatching a brief moment of rest in a chair, but not sleeping—he is uneasy and moves restlessly—

The ragged Chinaman, who was admitted by Dr. Prausnitz, now sneaks out to a secluded place at the wall, unwinds a long strip of cloth from around his body, throws one end over the wall and the iron grille, patiently waiting, listening intently—

The strip of cloth moves, jerked from the unseen side of the wall—The ragged Chinaman holds fast to the cloth, bracing his foot against the wall—the head of a Chinese Bandit appears above the wall—he climbs up over the sharp-pointed grille and drops inside the wall—a second Bandit appears, follows down, also a third—the Bandit insignia, a distinctive sash, is plainly seen on all three men—all are armed with murderous long knives and revolvers—

The head of a fourth Bandit appears above the grille—MacDunn, in the tower, arouses himself, sees him, fires a rifle—the Bandit drops back out of sight—MacDunn is amazed at his marksmanship—The Bandits inside the wall run for cover—Fielding leaps up and runs out—The Bandits creep through the darkness—coming into the room where Virginia is—suddenly the terror-stricken shriek of Virginia's voice—Instantly the place is in an uproar—a terrific, swift fight follows in which the Bandits are quickly overwhelmed and killed.

Bradwick, the profiteer, rushes in and is startled to recognize one of the dying Bandits, who also recognizes him—Fearful that the Bandit may betray him, Bradwick drags him outside, then secretly talks with him and learns that the chief Bandit is one who had bought ammunition from Bradwick and would therefore be on friendly terms with him—the wounded Bandit dies—Bradwick, with a sudden impulse, removes the Bandit's scarf insignia and conceals it—Moon Toy has witnessed this—Bradwick is startled as he sees her—she questions him—he tells her that he can save her and himself—he knows the Bandit leader, who would spare them if the gates are opened to admit him and his band—Moon Toy pretends to agree that she will join Bradwick in the plan—actually she is torn with indecision, swayed by a sense of loyalty to her fellow prisoners—

Moon Toy, in a critical scene with Fielding—shows that she has fallen in love with him, despite her knowledge that it is hopeless, because he loves Virginia—she finally breaks and betrays Bradwick, telling Fielding the truth—

Fielding thanks her—he secretly watches Bradwick and sees him making his way toward the main gate—

Bradwick cautiously takes out the Bandit sash insignia, waving it toward the Bandit lines, like a flag of truce—Sau Chung darts out from the shadows, poises a murderous-looking knife, throws it swiftly with unerring aim, striking Bradwick down, dead—From a window, Moon Toy sees this in deadly silence—Fielding appears—Sau Chung grimly explains his knowledge of Bradwick's connection with the Bandits—

Sau Chung pulls Bradwick's body away from the gates, searches it, finds Johnson's money and returns it to Johnson, who is so overjoyed at getting it that he almost has a spasm—Fielding suggests that Johnson may now wish to do what he said he'd do—use the money to buy off the Bandits—Johnson crawfishes and says the Bandits are too desperate now—Fielding is disgusted, but sternly reminds Johnson that Sau Chung was responsible for getting the money back and forcefully suggests a reward—

Johnson painfully manages to part himself from some of the money and gives it to Sau Chung—Sau Chung is greatly excited—this is more money than he has ever seen in his life—he talks wildly about the marvelous things he will do with it when he gets out of here, and then flops over because of weakness due to lack of food.

Brief time lapse.

Food supplies are almost exhausted—everyone is starving—the Bandit attack grows worse—

Fielding, half blind from fatigue and hunger, carries on without sleep—he is everywhere, watching everything, encouraging everyone—Virginia pleads with him, tries to get him to rest—he tells her it is impossible—they are alone for a moment—both of them feel that they are facing eternity—she asks him what is the worst that could happen if the Bandits should capture them—he replies in unfinished sentences, without giving details, but saying enough to convey that their fate would be worse than horrible—Virginia quietly says she understands and it would be better to die first—Fielding thanks her for understanding—*there is the mood of a pledge of death between them, bringing them very close at* this moment—

Fielding secretly shows Virginia the hiding place of a bottle of poison which he has discovered and concealed for desperate emergency—he tells her it is better that all should die than fall into the hands of the Bandits—she understands—if the worst comes to worst, she is to help him in administering the poison to all—she agrees.

Johnson cries out in sudden frenzy, offering all his money to anyone who will get through the Bandit lines and bring a rescuing party and food—Fielding angrily silences him, declaring there is no hope of getting through—the Bandits entirely surround them—But Sau Chung, in half-starved delirium, says that for all that money he will get through, and before Fielding can stop him, he has slipped out the front gate—of course he is instantly shot down by the Bandits, and dies horribly before their eyes—This brings a grim comment from Fielding about the comparative importance of money and life, conveying the thought that in the presence of death, money means nothing, and all men are equal.

That night conditions are desperate—children are whimpering—women crying—men are groaning, half dying—several die of starvation—Johnson insanely suggests to Fielding that they let the Chinese children die and give the milk and food to others—Fielding can scarcely restrain himself from laying hands on Johnson—

Alone, Fielding secretly decides on an extreme desperate attempt—he will go out and try to find the food supply which the Jew was seeking when he sacrificed his life—Fielding confides his plan only to MacDunn, who begs him not to make the attempt, but Fielding orders MacDunn to stand guard at the side-wall door and wait for him—

Fielding sneaks out, keeping in black shadows, constantly imperiled by the continued random shooting of the Bandits—he follows the description given him by the Jew—he finds the little shop, but discovers that the Bandits have taken all the food except a pitifully small amount which they evidently overlooked—he takes the food and starts back—the Bandits now discover Fielding's presence outside the compound, and open a hail of fire, through which he passes safely and gets in through the side-wall door—

Fielding finds the compound in confusion and disorganization because of his absence—Refugees fighting over the poor goat which has been killed to cook for food—MacDunn is battered from defending the goat and regrets that "Dora" is gone; she wasn't a bad sort after all—the kids will miss her—Fielding resumes command with dynamic force—distributes the few morsels of food he has brought, which precipitates a new battle among the Refugee Chinamen—

Time elapse—

The last desperate hours—the last morsels of food—no hope of rescue—the Bandit's firing becoming heavier—their efforts to break in more menacing—the Franciscan Nun is praying in French—

Fielding decides all is lost. The food is all gone except one tiny morsel apiece for the evening meal. Then starvation will follow, dropping them one by one, or surrender to the Bandits. He fears that some will go insane or rush out and surrender to the Bandits. *He secretly talks with Virginia—together they plan death for all of them,* to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Bandits to suffer tortures worse than death.

The "last supper" is about to be served—the last pitiful morsels of food—Fielding secretly puts the poison in a small jug of wine, then joins the others for the "last supper"—Fielding forces a cheery bravado and proposes they drink a last toast together—Virginia meets his eyes and understands—Fielding sends MacDunn for the wine—Virginia's expression tells Fielding that she is ready—she will go through with their pact—MacDunn returns with the wine and pours a glass for each—Fielding calls for farewell toasts and the principals respond pathetically or humorously—

As Fielding and Virginia raise the wine to their lips, the faint sound of galloping hoofs is heard—the Refugees at first think it is the Bandits—

Flash of a Bandit alarmed—he signals others—the Bandits flee into the darkness—

(Intercut the supper scene with the swiftly riding company of Chinese National Cavalry galloping to the rescue—the National Army uniforms contrasting sharply with the ragged appearance of the few Bandits who have been seen.

Develop the situation so that the audience will believe that the poisoned wine will be drunk before help comes, when suddenly—)

The Chinese troops swarm into the compound and meet a pandemonium of welcome. The commander, who speaks excellent English, evidently has strict orders to look to the safety of Johnson, important to the Chinese Government—the commander goes at once to him.

In the confusion, the modest Fielding is shouldered aside and completely lost in the shuffle—all attention centered on Johnson, the oil man, a noted figure in the Far East because of his prominence and wealth—Johnson's shallow nature causes him to accept his sudden prominence as though deserved because of personal heroism.

Virginia finds Fielding—

Moon Toy, watches them, a little sadly—MacDunn, unaware, dumbly asks Moon Toy if he can escort her—she comes out of her mood, with a forced smile, and accepts—

Virginia and Fielding—a final moment together—through the grim test of character has come a close understanding between them—they have faced death together, and it has taught them a new meaning of life—impulsively she kisses him—she joins her family who are waiting for her, ready to leave for Harbin—

Fielding, with philosophical amusement, accepts the sudden fate which plunges him from dictator down to an ordinary mortal once more—he watches Virginia leave, and then, with a new determination, demands the attention of Johnson and asks if he can get his job back—

Johnson, with puffed up importance, says he will take it under consideration—come around and see him next week—Fielding says there's one condition—his headquarters must be in Harbin—he grins defiantly at Johnson—a new permanent optimism seems born within him—unquenchable happiness—thinking of Virginia.

THE END

CHAPTER XX

The Continuity

Transatlantic Merry-Go-Round has been selected for the specimen continuity, first, because it is a highly successful picture of the general entertainment type, upon which the prosperity of the cinema relies; secondly, it is from an original screen story, thereby revealing creative screen writing from beginning to end; thirdly, it is composed of a medley of various film elements and a combination of various kinds of situations, thus offering opportunity for excellent all-around study in continuity writing.

The *continuity*, naturally, is the last manuscript written in the preparation of a story for the screen; it is the word-for-word, action-for-action plans, specifications, and blueprint, so to speak, from which the director must make the production. It is the result of many conferences between the scenarists, the supervisor or producer, and often the director and other members of the production staff.

While few continuities are purchased from outside sources, the studios preferring to create these under their own supervision, every author seeking to embark upon a screen-writing career should nevertheless make a definite study of modern continuities. It gives him a closer insight into the possibilities and boundaries of the current cinema, as well as a thorough working knowledge of the technique of screen writing as practiced in actual production of stories.

Note. In credit titles the continuity is often called *screen play.*

Transatlantic Merry-Go-Round is an excellent continuity for this purpose.

An examination of the manuscript of *Transatlantic Merry-Go-Round,* as herein presented, reveals that in preparing the screen play the scenarists selected the *composite* form of construction. It is quite obviously a blend of the two basic storytelling styles, (1) dramatic and (2) literary, with (3) certain aspects presented in a manner inherent to the cinema.

Some of the incidents and situations in the script have been created primarily for movement, others were written chiefly in dialogue, while a third group of scenes is presented by means of typical and unique film effects.

The pace, or tempo, is fundamentally moderate, with certain situations speeded up to heighten drama or suspense in desired instances.

In addition to straightforward action, retrospects are also used to relate certain parts of the plot.

It will also be observed that the plot contains more than the average number of principal characters, yet they are handled without confusion or too much spread of interest.

As for treatment, the mood and spirit chosen are a mixture of modern gaiety, brightness, and good humor, now and then counterbalanced by a dash of menace or excitement. The scenes, as to both dialogue and action, are handled in a colloquially smart manner, as befits the characters, background, and general theme of the story.

Further, the treatment as it applies to individual scenes and sequences discloses many expert touches, bits of business, twists, and an impressive use of camera angles and effects.

For Special Study

In studying this detailed shooting script in accordance with the comments and observations made throughout the present volume, particular attention should be given the following scenes:

SCENES	
1–10	The gay life, music, and entertainment on a modern transatlantic liner being the central theme of the story, the screen play opens directly on this phase, immediately establishing the mood, background, pace, as well as pointing up the theme.
15–16	Note the interesting manner in which a dual transition and retrospect is made from the boat in mid-ocean back to the pier in New York City.
17–18	Varied truck shots and reverse angles are here used to good effect.
16–40	By centering these scenes on the pier, showing the various characters as they arrive, and their relation to each other, much footage is saved; it clarifies the plot, adds color, and also allows the planting of incidents that have bearing upon later events.
25–26	A good example of the pan shot, used in introducing Brett, the hero of the story.
40	The incident of Sally kissing Brett by mistake is a good bit of business and gets them acquainted without the usual hackneyed formalities.
57	The idea of having Shortie, Brett's confederate, a steward on the boat is a clever angle, and contributes many values throughout the plot.
66	Earlier in the story we have had a retrospect in action, where the plot faded back in cinema form. Here is a retrospect in straight footlight fashion. In other words, Sally reveals many facts regarding her past life, facts that must be known by the audience, but it is all done in dialogue, *Sally simply relates* the facts to Denby. It could have been shown by a fade-back, but the scenarists decided otherwise in this instance, and wisely so.
103	Note how novelty and movement are injected into this love scene by having Brett and Sally play shuffleboard as they converse.

108–109	Study the technique in these scenes dealing with the disappearance of the detective's billfold. The treatment is subtle and excellent. Note how, by use of a blend of dialogue, dissolves, and camera angles, it is revealed in a surprise twist that Brett has stolen the purse, although we have never seen him take it.
110	Another clever twist here. The detective unknowingly gets one of his own stolen fifty-dollar bills when he is cashing a money order.
114–115	Observe how this extremely long scene is an example of the *dramatic* form in the handling of a situation.
160	Another example of interesting treatment. As Sally and her brother go through an adagio dance as part of the ship's entertainment, they discuss important plot dialogue.
171	Suspense and an added twist is given by having the waiter, instead of Shortie, pick up the napkin with the stolen necklace in it.
188–189	Clever business where detective, by means of a book, gives Brett a hint to return the necklace.
203–204	There is a good plot twist here in which the necklace is passed from one character to the other while swimming under water in the pool.
214	Here the detective, by means of dialogue, gives Brett a hint to return the necklace. Compare this with Scene 189.
217	Note the brief, yet forceful and colloquial manner in which the dialogue is written in this scene.
219–220	Observe how the dissolve is used for transition purposes here, showing Ballinger sneaking out of a lifeboat in one scene, and getting into a barber's chair in the following scene.

220–221	The dolly shot is here used to supply a good touch. As it pulls back we observe that the detective is in the next chair to the fugitive Ballinger.
225	The pan shot is utilized to effect here.
247	The lap dissolve is called into play to jump quickly to the next important situation.
248–251	For the climax the dramatic form is again resorted to, the handling being almost entirely by dialogue.
250	Note the technique here. The camera is focused on one group of characters, when suddenly the voice of an unseen person comes into the scene. The camera then Pans over and picks up the character who has just spoken.
253–254	This incident is a clever playback on the incident in Scenes 108–109, only this time the detective gets the better of the pocket-picking. Note the subtle, surprise technique; also the dissolve and camera effects in Scenes 251–252.
254–255	With the return of the bracelet, observe how quickly the story is brought to an end, for all plot interest has now ceased.
255	The screen play fades out on Denby and his entertainers going on with a showboat number, to theme the picture as built in the premise of the opening scenes of the story.

CONTINUITY OF TRANSATLANTIC MERRY-GO-ROUND

Credits

Original Story by Leon Gordon

Screen Play (Continuity) by Joseph Moncure March and Harry W. Conn

Directed by Benjamin Stoloff

Produced by Edward Small

Distributed by United Artists

Cast: Gene Raymond, Nancy Carroll, Jack Benny, Sidney Blackmer, Ralph Morgan, Sam Hardy, Mitzi Green, William Boyd, Shirley Grey, Sidney Howard, Sid Silvers, Robert Elliott, the Boswell Sisters, Jean Sargent, Frank Parker, Jimmy Grier's orchestra

TRANSATLANTIC MERRY-GO-ROUND

SCENE

1 CREDIT TITLES reach the screen—superimposed on a background of steaming funnels belching steam—accompanied by a musical score of exciting tempo.

DISSOLVE TO:

2 LONG SHOT—NIGHT

Large ocean liner, plowing through darkened waters, its decks and portholes brilliantly illuminated.

CUT TO:

3 QUICK FLASH—MEDIUM SHOT—PROW OF SHIP

Coming straight onto the CAMERA. The speed at which she is traveling throws a phosphorescent spray many feet into the air—almost up to the bowsprit, under which is carved, in ornate letters, *S. S. Progress.*

DISSOLVE TO:

4 LONG SHOT

Taking in audience and entertainers on board the *S. S. Progress.* The voices of Jean Sargent and Frank Parker are heard singing *Rock and Roll.*

CUT TO:

5 CLOSE SHOT—SARGENT AND PARKER

6 CAMERA PANS TO MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT of Denby at microphone. He is reading from a sheet of paper.

DENBY

(into mike)

Hello again! This is Chad Denby—remember?—h'mm—Your Master of Ceremonies—coming to you with another program in mid-Atlantic—For the benefit of you folks who just tuned in I want to say that the passengers are all comfortably seated—I wish you listeners back there in the small towns and villages could see the life and glamour on this floating palace—We're having *oceans* of fun—Am I hot tonight!

Mary enters.

MARY

Oh-h, Mister Den-n--by—

Denby

Yep—everybody's having a good time but me—What do you want, Mary?

Mary

I just wrote a poem about the Atlantic Ocean—

Denby

But, Mary—everybody's having such a great time—why spoil it?

Mary

Somebody's got to do it—

Denby

Well, let's hear the poem—

Mary

(reads from paper)

Oh, you dear Atlantic Ocean—how you spread across the sea—From New York to dear old Europe—just for boats to ride on thee—

Denby

(cutting in)

Very good, Mary—

Mary

But I'm not finished yet—(Poem)—And your waves are so colossal—rocking boats both too and fro—Oh-h, Atlantic, how I love you (signs of seasickness)—(repeats)—how I love you—

Denby

What's the matter, Mary?

Mary

I'm getting seasick—

Denby

(mockingly)

H'mm—*Dear* Atlantic—

Mary

Mr. Denby—What do you think I ought to do with that part?

Denby

Put the whole thing in an envelope and mail it through a porthole—

The voices of Frank Parker and Jean Sargent can be heard during this announcement.

DENBY

You are listening to the golden voices of Jean Sargent and Frank Parker, who are entertaining with that rollicking bit of syncopation, *Rock and Roll*—everybody's having a good time—

Mary enters and starts reading from a sheet of paper.

MARY

(reading)

Oh, Mr. Den-n--by!

DENBY

(into mike)

Everyone but me—what do you want now, Mary?

MARY

I feel better now—I've got a riddle! When is a plate of bean soup not a plate of bean soup?

DENBY

All right. When *is* a plate of bean soup not a plate of noodle soup?

MARY

When it falls off the table and turns turtle—Cute?

DENBY

(reacting sourly)

Mary—fall off the boat and turn to the left—

DISSOLVE TO:

7 LONG SHOT

Finale of act of trio in which Sally is prominent.

8 CLOSE SHOT

Trio taking bows.

CUT TO:

9 DENBY AT MICROPHONE

DENBY

(excitedly; applause comes in)

Listen to that applause—what other steamship line gives you this entertainment on the high seas? Where is it coming from?—you said it! the Transatlantic Merry-go-round of 1934—What a boat!—A snappy deck—three hot funnels—a hundred galloping portholes—and all nice people! Try a trip on our boat for what ails you. Well, this concludes the performance of the Atlantic Follies—Chad Denby signing off until tomorrow night—Good night, folks!

DISSOLVE TO:

10 AUDITORIUM

Passengers laughing and talking and strolling out on the moonlit decks. PICK UP LOTHER AND FOLLOW HIM DOWN COMPANIONWAY. PICK UP CAPTAIN AND THIRD OFFICER coming up from the opposite direction.

LOTHER

(genially)

Good night, Captain.

CAPTAIN

Good night, Mr. Lother.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

11 LOTHER WALKS DOWN COMPANIONWAY TO SALLY'S ROOM—NUMBER 51C.

WE DOLLY WITH HIM IN CLOSE SHOT.

He goes in door, closes it, and we hear the door lock.

We stay on the exterior of door, where we hear two shots fired—a woman screams—we see the Steward run up to the door, and we

CUT TO:

12 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—LOTHER

He is lying on the floor—dead.

CUT TO:

13 CLOSE SHOT—EXTERIOR DOOR

The Steward comes up and starts pounding on the door.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

14 INSIDE CHARTHOUSE

First and Second Navigation Officers leaning over chart.

FIRST NAVIGATION OFFICER

Have you taken the soundings?

SECOND NAVIGATION OFFICER

Yes, Sir—here's our position now.

As the officers lean over the chart,

CUT TO:

15 CLOSE SHOT—officer's hand tracing the progress of the ship on the chart.

SECOND NAVIGATION OFFICER

We're off the southeastern point of Newfoundland—43° West and 42° North—running dead to time.

(His hand traces backward on the chart)

Twenty-four hours ago—38°, 41°—

(His hand continues going backwards)

Thirty-six hours off the point light—fifty-eight hours —back in—NEW YORK!

As he says "New York" the setup becomes diffused. SOUND TRACK CARRIES a honking and tooting of motor horns—the sound of many voices—an orchestra playing.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

16 SIGN IN GIGANTIC FIGURES:

"PIER 13" (New York Docks)

Over this the SOUND TRACK carries miscellaneous noises in fast tempo—hooting of taxicabs—screeching of brakes—babble of excited voices—hawkers, porters, passengers. CAMERA PANS DOWN to the passenger entrance at Dock 13 of the Green Funnel Line.

Within the entire radius of the CAMERA LENS teeming humanity; passengers—vendors selling streamers—steamship officials—a couple of plain-clothes men—porters, stewards, messenger boys with flowers, and policemen who keep them moving.

17 MEDIUM SHOT—NEWSBOY

NEWSBOY

(calling)

Paper!—Extra!—Ballinger breaks jail!

(*Note:* Throughout this entire departure sequence we occasionally hear this boy's voice calling the above)

PULL CAMERA BACK TO VERY LONG SHOT. Private cars and taxis are arriving in a stream, tooting impatiently as they jockey for a position to drop their passengers and baggage. In the distance can be heard the occasional wailing whistles of crafts in the stream and, from the decks of the *S. S. Progress*, the ship's orchestra playing gay, familiar tunes.

As a taxi drives up, CAMERA DOLLIES BACK TO MEDIUM SHOT, shooting from the roadway through taxi window to the entrance of the dock. Its occupant is LEE LOTHER (the man we saw dead in first sequence).

18 REVERSE ANGLE

He jumps out, pays taxi; porter grabs his hand baggage.

PORTER

Name and reservation, sir?

LOTHER

Lee Lother—4C.

19 TRAVEL SHOT

As they move through the crowd. SOUND TRACK carries paper boy's voice calling the extra. Lother stops and buys a paper. In close proximity is a man reading one of the papers—a woman is looking over his shoulder.

MAN

(heatedly)

Escaped again!—More bank robberies!—More holdups!—What we need is a police force!

Lother overhears this as he pays for paper and moves on reading paper, followed by porter, also trying to read it over Lother's shoulder.

PORTER

They'll be a lot of shooting before they get that guy again—slippery as an eel.

CUT TO:

20 EXTERIOR DOCKS

A limousine discharges its passengers. A taxi behind it is tooting impatiently to get alongside.

21 INTERIOR TAXI—ANYA ROSSON AND HER HUSBAND

Anya is a young Russian, blonde, extremely attractive, beautifully dressed—speaks with a slight accent. She is puffing nervously at a cigarette. Her husband is young, middle-aged Grand Mitchell type. They get quickly out of the car and move toward dock. At first-class gangplank they stop. Porter carrying their baggage starts to take it aboard.

ANYA

Wait a minute, porter—my husband's not going aboard.

Porter bows away to a respectful distance. Anya places her hand on her husband's arm.

ANYA

(quietly)

Going to miss me?

Rosson nods his head—his voice is a little husky.

ROSSON

Send me a wireless when you arrive—and have a good time—that's the important thing.

ANYA

(smiling)

It's all happened so suddenly—I can hardly believe I'm going—

As she is speaking these lines her eyes are searching for someone on the ship.

CUT TO:

22 WHAT SHE SEES—QUICK FLASH—LOTHER—

Near the rail. He is looking in another direction—obviously does not see her.

CUT BACK TO:

23 ANYA AND HER HUSBAND

ANYA

Too bad you couldn't come, too, Herbert.

ROSSON

(kindly)

As long as we can indulge your whims—somebody in the family has to work.

(He kisses her quickly.)

Good-bye, my dear. If I keep those Duluth people waiting another minute, I'll lose the deal.

ANYA

Don't let me go without the jewel case.

(He puts his hand in his pocket and hands
her a small case.)

The American Express cheques are in there, aren't they?

ROSSON

(nodding)

You can pick up your letter of credit at Cook's in Cherbourg. Goodbye.

They embrace. Quickly she takes a flower from the corsage she is wearing and places it affectionately in his lapel, pats his cheek, and, without another word, goes up the gangplank followed by the porter. Rosson stands bareheaded watching her for a moment. CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE to him. We see that his mildness is belied by his eyes and that he is under an emotional strain. His hand goes to the lapel of his coat. He pulls out the flower, crushes it in his hand, and let's it slowly fall to the ground.

24 DOLLY SHOT—HE HURRIES BACK THROUGH THE CROWD

Finds a porter—hands him a check.

ROSSON

Get my baggage out of the check room and put it aboard this ship.

PORTER

Yes, sir—where's your reservation?

ROSSON

(pulling out passport and steamship ticket)

Cabin 108—Second Class—I'll see you aboard.

Rosson disappears through the crowd. The porter, who was already carrying a bag when approached by Rosson, puts its down on top of a theatrical trunk while he goes to collect Rosson's baggage from the check room. CAMERA STAYS ON TRUNK on which is printed: "Sally Marsh—Marsh Trio." A girl is leaning against the trunk, her back to the CAMERA. She turns slowly—it is SALLY MARSH. Beside her is NED, turning the pages of *Variety.* Also a porter.

SALLY

(to Porter)

Take these things to 51C and the other trunk has my name on it just like this.

PORTER

You get aboard, Miss—I'll take care of it.

SALLY

It's very important—it has our costumes in it.

VOICE

Hey, Sally.

Chad Denby, Master of Ceremonies, comes into scene.

DENBY

The big star of Chad Denby's big seagoing show. We'll have your name up in lighthouses from here to England.

Sally is looking around rather nervously.

SALLY

Well, that's something—even if only the fish can see it.

DENBY

Are you happy?

SALLY

Will be—as soon as the ship sails.

NED

I thought I had our sailing covered up—

(indicates paper)

—and here it is.

SALLY

(alarmed)

Do you think Lother could have seen it?

DENBY

You'd better get on board. I'll take care of the trunks. Hey, porter!

Sally moves near gangplank near which is standing a gang of five or six vaudevillians of various types, etc., etc. Suddenly they see Sally and rush forward with enthusiastic greetings.

FIRST VAUDEVILLIAN

Just read in *Variety* you were sailing. Picked up some of the boys and girls to come down and give you a cheer.

General ad-lib as they give Sally flowers, wish her luck, etc. Sally is ill at ease—she ad-libs with the others.

FIRST VAUDEVILLIAN

Say, these steamship companies are going into the show business in a big way.

SECOND VAUDEVILLIAN

I should say so—this transatlantic showboat idea is a novelty.

THIRD VAUDEVILLIAN

I think it's a conspiracy—They want to take all the vaudeville acts out to the middle of the Atlantic and dump them overboard.

FOURTH VAUDEVILLIAN

Ha! Ha! That's a dirty trick to play on the fish!

FIFTH VAUDEVILLIAN

Do they pay any kind of money on these big ships?

FIRST VAUDEVILLIAN

Sixty-two fifty for teams and a hundred and a quarter for quartets.

25

FIFTH VAUDEVILLIAN

I wouldn't sing on a rowboat for that kind of dough!

The foregoing lines are more or less spoken together—disjointedly.

CAMERA PANS slowly over to the roped-off passport enclosure at which an official is sitting stamping visas. CAMERA MOVES IN close to his hand holding a passport.

CUT TO:

26 CLOSE SHOT—THE PASSPORT, SHOWING:

PHOTO
JAMES BRETT
New York
Age: 24
Single
Occupation: Architect

We see the official stamp come down on the passport as CAMERA PANS UP TO MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT OF JIMMY BRETT (Gene Raymond). He takes back his passport.

BRETT

Thanks.

He is scanning the dock, obviously in search of someone. He moves toward steerage gangplank in the direction of SHORTIE—a depressed-looking individual in steward's white coat.

Shortie's eyes are anxiously searching the crowd. His expression is anything but happy. He sees Brett and moves toward him.

SHORTIE

Now listen, Jimmy—!

Brett doesn't even glance at him but continues to walk past, speaking as he does so.

BRETT

Not here—follow me around the shed.

DISSOLVE TO:

27 BACK OF SHED—BRETT AND SHORTIE

BRETT

(looking around furtively. He then turns to Shortie)

Don't you know better than to talk to me with people around?

SHORTIE

(sarcastically)

Oh, putting on the swell, eh?

BRETT

I thought you were a smart guy.

SHORTIE

If I was smart I wouldn't be working my way over on this ship.

(He lights a cigarette)

BRETT

We didn't have enough dough for two tickets, did we?

SHORTIE

We coulda got two third-class!

BRETT

No bank roll there, boy.

(quickly)

Lucky I could get you signed on—they picked up that Pittsburgh jeweler—made him talk. The heat's on, Shortie—and those Atlantic breezes are going to be mighty welcome.

SHORTIE

Oh, I'm not squawkin', but I'm not used to working and it's a bad habit to get into.

BRETT

It'll never hurt you—Got any money?

SHORTIE

A dollar seventy and I'm gonna keep it!

BRETT

No, you're not. Give me that dollar seventy.

SHORTIE

I'll give you half of it.

(He goes to his pocket and extracts money)

Here's seventy cents.

(Brett takes it)

At this point two uniformed cops approach. Brett sees them.

BRETT

Nix, the law!

SHORTIE

(immediately becomes servile)

Yes, sir!—I will, sir—Certainly, sir!

BRETT

(speaking casually as the man comes near)

He's a colored man in chauffeur's uniform carrying a basket of fruit.

SHORTIE

I'll watch for him, sir.

The cops have stopped and are eying Shortie.

BRETT

Thank you, and here's seventy cents for your trouble.

Shortie pockets the money and is about to start away.

COP

Just a minute!

Shortie swallows hard—turns.

SHORTIE

You speaking to me, sir?

COP

(gruffly)

Can't you read?

(He points)

Shortie looks to what Cop is pointing at.

CUT TO:

28 LARGE SIGN: "NO SMOKING"

CUT BACK TO:

29 SHORTIE AND TWO COPS

Shortie heaves a sigh of relief and drops his cigarette. The cop puts his foot on it.

FIRST COP

You ought to know better than that.

The two dicks move off around the shed.

CUT TO:

30 BRETT AND SHORTIE

BRETT

Quick, let me have that money. I'm broke and I'll need it for tips.

SHORTIE

Oh, no—You're not gonna give my hard-earned money away.

CUT TO:

31 ONE OF THE STEWARDS APPROACHING

CUT TO:

32 BRETT AND SHORTIE

Brett takes advantage of the situation knowing the steward is Shortie's boss.

SHORTIE

Nix—here comes my boss.

BRETT

(to Shortie—loud enough for steward to hear)

Don't forget that $1.70 change.

Shortie, in a spot, hands it to Brett. The steward walks away.

SHORTIE

You're a wise guy—Gimme back—

BRETT

(interrupts)

Shortie, look!

CUT TO:

33 WHAT THEY SEE

Two plain-clothes detectives are shaking hands with INSPECTOR MCKINNEY. Behind McKinney is a porter carrying his suitcase, etc.

FIRST DETECTIVE

Well, pleasant trip, Inspector.

INSPECTOR

Thanks. I've been waiting fifteen years for this vacation. What are you boys doing here?

CUT TO:

34 CLOSE SHOT—NEWSPAPER IN DETECTIVE'S HAND

As he lets it fall open. Headlines:

"Ballinger Breaks Jail Again"

And a picture of Ballinger.

CUT BACK TO:

35 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT — BRETT AND SHORTIE WATCHING THE INSPECTOR.

BRETT

McKinney!—The smartest dick in Manhattan.

SHORTIE

You don't think—?

BRETT

Looks like he's taking a trip—see the baggage? The only time they ever picked me up, McKinney walked through the room while they were grilling—let's see how good his memory is.

As he moves forward.

SHORTIE

Jimmy, Don't!

(But Brett is gone)

CUT TO:

36 INSPECTOR MCKINNEY AND THE TWO DETECTIVES

FIRST DETECTIVE

We got a tip Ballinger might jump this boat.

MCKINNEY

(smiling)

Not interested, boys. When I left headquarters this morning—I cut the words "police" and "criminals" right out of my vocabulary.

SECOND DETECTIVE

Don't blame you, sir—you've earned a rest.

Brett comes quickly into scene.

BRETT

Pardon me, gentlemen—have you noticed a colored man in chauffeur's uniform, carrying a l-a-r-g-e basket of—fruit?

As he says this he looks the Inspector straight in the eye. There is no sign of recognition on McKinney's part, who replies casually:

MCKINNEY

No, I haven't.

A little smile of satisfaction overspreads Brett's countenance as he thanks them and hurries on through the crowd.

CUT BACK TO:

37 BRETT AND INSPECTOR

CAMERA PANS TO coffin on a truck being pushed by a docker. A woman in mourning follows and gets on the boat. All through this scene policemen are seen at short intervals making their way hurriedly through the crowd.

38 TRAVEL SHOT

Until the coffin becomes the background of a bride and groom who are being showered with rice.

CUT TO:

39 CLOSE SHOT—COFFIN AS THE RICE HITS IT.

CUT BACK TO:

40 SALLY AND VAUDEVILLIANS

You're darlings to see me off—I'll write you as soon as I get there.

VAUDEVILLIAN

Coming back on the same boat?

SALLY

Guess not—we're going to try and line up some kind of bookings over there.

VAUDEVILLIAN

Well, good-by, beautiful—I've wanted an excuse to do this for a long time.

ANOTHER VAUDEVILLIAN

Line up, boys!

He grabs Sally and kisses her. The next moment there is general confusion. The gang are all patting her on the back, wishing her luck, etc. Mechanically she kisses each one of them.

As she is doing this, Jimmy Brett, hurrying from left to right, gets mixed up in the group. Sally mechanically kisses him, the next moment realizes her mistake and smiles with embarrassment as the vaudevillians laugh.

BRETT

(after kiss)

That was sweet of you.

The orchestra from the deck commences to play *Sweet of You*. Brett removes his hat, looks at Sally admiringly and grins.

SALLY

I'm so sorry!

BRETT

(facetiously)

Want to take it back?

He leans toward her hopefully.

SALLY

I thought you were one of my friends.

BRETT

I'd *like* to be.

(anxiously)

Sailing on the *Progress?*

SALLY

Yes—are you?

BRETT

(looking her straight in the eye and smiling)

I wouldn't miss this boat for a million.

SALLY

(looking at boat with admiration)

She looks like a lot of other boats. I grant you she's beautiful.

(still looking at boat)

BRETT

(who hasn't taken his eyes off Sally for an instant)

I'll say she is!

SALLY

Nice lines—

BRETT

Yes—

Sally turns—sees he's looking at her—smiles.

SALLY

Like her paint job?

BRETT

Very much—

SALLY

(searching for handkerchief)

You've got lipstick all over you.

BRETT

I could stand some more—

SALLY

(laughing)

—You'll have all the boys tipping their hats to you—

(she reaches up with her handkerchief)

—let me wipe it off.

BRETT

No! don't touch it! I want the *world* to see my *shame.*

NED comes quickly into scene—he's impatient to get her aboard.

NED

Come on, Sally.

As they move off toward ship.

CUT TO:

41 QUICK FLASH—ORCHESTRA PLAYING *Sweet of You*

With one of its members singing the refrain through a megaphone.

42 CLOSE SHOT—SALLY

Looking back over her shoulder at Brett

43 QUICK FLASH—LOTHER'S FACE—

Among the crowded passengers at the railing, watching Sally. He smiles to himself and steps back.

44 QUICK FLASH—ANYA
Watching Lother.

45 CLOSE SHOT—BRETT
His eyes are twinkling—there is a smile on his lips—he is evidently very much impressed. He watches Sally move toward gangplank.

46 MEDIUM SHOT
As Brett starts to move away he bumps into a messenger boy carrying a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

BRETT
(quickly)
Who are those flowers for?

MESSENGER BOY
(looking at label)
Mrs. Armitich.

BRETT
Glad I caught you in time—Mrs. Armitich is not sailing—so give them to my sister—that lady with the beautiful red hair going up the gangplank.

He tears label from bouquet.

MESSENGER BOY
But I'm supposed to—

BRETT
(in lordly manner)
—don't argue or I'll close my account!

MESSENGER BOY
Okay. What's her name?—

BRETT
—with the red hair—Hurry!!

He gives the boy a push, shoving him out of picture.

CUT TO:

47 GANGPLANK—LONG SHOT FROM BRETT'S ANGLE
We see the boy overtake Sally just before she steps aboard. She takes the flowers—looks surprised—evidently asks the boy who they came from. We see the boy point in Brett's direction. She smiles

her thanks just as the fellow singing through the megaphone comes to the phrase—"It was sweet of you."

CUT TO:

48 TAXI ARRIVING—APPARENTLY EMPTY

Porter yanks open the door. Seated on a suitcase on the floor, the befuddled victim of alcohol, is DAN CAMPBELL (Sidney Howard). He has a bottle in his hand and beams at the porter.

DAN

Come in, my dear fellow—pull up a chair—delighted to meet you! My name's Campbell.

He extends his hand. By now the taxi driver has reached the door. There is an impatient tooting of cars from behind.

DRIVER

Come on—get out of there!

DAN

Gentlemen—a toast! Here's to—

DRIVER

(to porter)

He's got a ticket for England—some guy loaded him into my cab.

They yank him to the sidewalk and send him on his way.

49 TRAVEL SHOT—DAN

As he staggers through the crowd—pauses to search through his pockets for something, as he comes to Mary Livingston and Chad Denby, CAMERA PANS TO favor them. Chad is talking to Mary.

DENBY

Mary—I've got a great show for this trip—and with my dry wit and humor—h'mm—a few more trips and we'll have to furnish straphangers for the passengers to hang on!

MARY

(sarcastically)

With your dry wit and humor—

DENBY

Oh yeah?—My personality put this thing over—

MARY

Maurice Chevalier! There's a fellow with personality.

DENBY

What's he got that I haven't got?

MARY

Well, he has a straw hat—

DENBY

(interrupting)

So have I—I can get it right out of my trunk.

MARY

—And he has sex appeal.

DENBY

So what?

MARY

Get that out of your trunk.

DENBY

All right—don't spoil the trip with any of those jokes—there's a nice bunch of people on this trip—nothing but class—I looked over the passenger list and they're all members of the Who's Who!

MARY

Never mind the Who's Who—Before I get on this boat I want to know What's What! How about my raise? All I get out of these ocean trips is dizzy.

DENBY

Don't blame it on the ocean!—All right, you'll get the raise!

Dan Campbell staggers in between them—Chad grabs hold of him to brace him up.

MARY

Is that one of the Who's Who?

DENBY

(embarrassed)

No—He's probably one of the "Here's How."

(holding up Dan to steady him)

Take it easy—the ocean's pretty rough today—

DAN

I'll say—how fast is this boat going?

DENBY

(winks to Mary)

Oh,—we're doing about thirty—

DAN

(speaking to himself)

Pretty good—thirty *miles* an hour—

DENBY

No. *Knots!*

DAN

What?

DENBY

Knots!

DAN

I can see you're no gentleman—

MARY

He's funny—maybe you can use him in the show, Mr. Denby.

DAN

Denby!—Are you Chad Denby?

DENBY

That's me!

DAN

Not the *real* Chad Denby?—

DENBY

Yes—Me—in person!

DAN

So what?

MARY

(laughing)

Where's your *dry* humor now, Chad?

Dan staggers.

DENBY

Be careful—come on—I better pour you on the boat—

As the three start away—Denby is still sore at the last remark.

DENBY

I can see where I won't talk much to you.

DAN

(misunderstanding)

Nuts to you too!

CUT TO:

50 LONG SHOT—THE DOCKS

The steerage and second-class gangways are already being lowered—visitors are streaming down the gangplanks from the first saloon. The orchestra is playing—quartermasters are shouting instructions—paper streamers are commencing to be thrown aboard.

CUT TO:

51 QUICK FLASH—THE LAST OF THE FREIGHT BEING SWUNG ABOARD IN THE NETS.

CUT TO:

52 GANGPLANK—MEDIUM SHOT

Denby has Campbell by the arm helping him up the gangplank. Campbell stumbles and his rubber legs buckle under him. Denby has some difficulty helping Campbell back on his feet. After Campbell is put on his feet again, he turns to Denby, and *very* seriously remarks.

CAMPBELL
(to Denby)

Steady, old boy—I've got you.

DENBY

Thanks—I appreciate it.

They proceed up gangplank, toward deck of boat. Two or three policemen in uniform are seen coming down gangplank, obviously leaving the boat.

FIRST POLICEMAN

He's not there, Inspector—we've searched every inch of the boat.

INSPECTOR

Okay—Report back to the desk.

CUT TO:

53 LONG SHOT—SHIP AND DOCKS

The last gangplank is dragged ashore. The orchestra strikes up *Rock and Roll.* People are cheering —streamers are flying in great profusion.

CUT TO:

54 LONG SHOT—FROM DOCKS

Slowly the big ship majestically maneuvers from the mooring. The streamers become taut—snap as the *S. S. Progress*—music playing—passengers waving—whistles blowing—moves out into the stream.

CUT TO:

55 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—LIFEBOAT UPPER DECK

Slowly the CAMERA is raised and we see the face of Ballinger, which we recognize from the newspaper. It immediately disappears and his hand comes up and drops a policeman's uniform and cap over the side of the boat into the water.

FADE-OUT.

56 FADE-IN:

ONE OR TWO ATMOSPHERIC SHOTS ABOARD SHIP

CUT TO:

57 BRETT'S CABIN ABOARD THE *S. S. Progress*

Brett has changed into flannels and is fixing his tie. The door opens and Shortie, carrying a heavy package and a bundle of telegrams, enters. Brett sees him in the mirror, speaks without turning.

BRETT

Took your time getting here.

SHORTIE

Yer lucky I'm here at all. I tell you, Jimmy—my feet'll never hold out.

BRETT

Stop squawking! You were doing this job on a ship four years ago when I first picked you up, weren't you?

SHORTIE

Yeah—but high livin's made me soft.

BRETT

How're the tips?

SHORTIE

(depressed)

A dollar forty.

BRETT

I'll need it—gave my last buck to the bedroom steward.

SHORTIE

Not a chance.

BRETT

(coaxingly)

Come on—

(He extends his hand)

I'll promote a card game, and we'll be sitting pretty.

SHORTIE

Until then—the dollar forty stays with me.

BRETT

Is that a nice way to talk to a pal?

SHORTIE

Don't let money spoil a beautiful friendship. Look at these here telegrams to be delivered! This ain't a job—it's a marathon.

He moves to door.

BRETT

Oh, Shortie!—

(his voice is casual)

—there's a girl on this ship—

SHORTIE

(contemptuously)

—there's thousands of 'em!

BRETT

(enthusiastically)

A thousand? She's one in a million—right off the top of the rosebush!

He takes it big.

SHORTIE

(sternly—with a quick look)

This is a business trip!

BRETT

She was wearing a white dress with a cute, black hat—and carrying a bag with S. M. on it.

(half to himself)

Funny—her name's not on the passenger list.

(He picks up passenger list)

SHORTIE

Maybe she's in the show—one of the troupers—did you ever think of that?

BRETT

(happily)

Why *didn't* I think of that?—I am going to scout around and see if I can find her.

A stateroom steward knocks and enters quickly.

Everything in order, sir?

(He sees Shortie and favors him with
an unfriendly look)

What are *you* doing here, my lad?

SHORTIE

Telegrams.

STEWARD

(aggressively)

Well—get a move on yer—then get back to yer station.

Shortie casts a look of despair at Jimmy and commences to exit.

BRETT

Just a minute, steward—haven't you forgotten something?

SHORTIE

No, sir?

BRETT

My change.

SHORTIE

Change?

BRETT

A dollar forty—out of the two dollars I gave you.

He extends his hand. Shortie favors him with a dirty look, hands him the dollar forty. The steward eyes him grimly and exits. Shortie starts to follow, suddenly gets an idea, and moves quickly to Brett's cabin trunk. He pulls out the top drawer.

58 CLOSE SHOT—IT'S CONTENTS

Gambling paraphernalia, cards, dice, etc.

59 CLOSE SHOT—SHORTIE'S HAND

Takes key and opens his drawer in Brett's trunk. He takes out a pair of dice and rolls them quickly two or three times on top of the trunk. Each time they throw a seven.

SHORTIE'S VOICE

Not bad—I'll use these to get even.

60 MEDIUM SHOT

As he moves toward door.

BRETT

Shortie!—you know my motto?

SHORTIE

Pleasure first if it don't interfere with business.

BRETT

Right!—but it doesn't have to apply to you—Keep your eyes open for anybody wearing a lot of cracked ice and give me the office.

SHORTIE

(visibly brightening)

Now you're talkin'!

He exits.

CUT TO:

61 OUTSIDE—TRUCKING SHOT

Shortie coming down corridor with a big basket of flowers and the parcel.

CUT TO:

62 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—LADY PASSENGER

She sticks her head out of her stateroom door and sees Shortie.

LADY

Boy!

SHORTIE

Yes, ma'am.

LADY

Will you come in and fix my porthole?

Shortie enters stateroom. CAMERA FOLLOWS him to porthole which he closes quickly. The lady tips him and Shortie starts out.

CUT TO:

63 OUTSIDE

Shortie is just closing the door. Sally Marsh enters scene.

SALLY

I'm looking for 48.

SHORTIE

Right down there, Miss.

He points.

CUT TO:

64 DOOR 48

Chad Denby's office on board.

DISSOLVE TO:

65 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT

Ned and Denby. Ned is sitting there very worried about Sally because Lother is aboard ship.

Denby

(speaking)

Then, after the first number, I tell the one about the Scotchman trying to open a pullman window—the Scotchman says to the window—"Gee you're tight."—and the window says—"You loosen up a bit and so will I."—Good?—And then I do the one—

(he stops—sees no reaction from Ned)

Oh—you don't like it, eh?

Ned

Chad—Lother's on the boat, and I'm worried sick about Sally—

Denby

Oh!—So that's it. Does she know he's on board?

Ned

No—but I'm going to keep my eye on—

The door opens—Sally enters.

Sally

(gaily)

Am I a member of this club?

Denby

(forcing a laugh)

You're the President. Come in! Your brother was just telling me a few jokes I can use on the radio—

Sally

Are you paying any attention to his jokes?—the first thing you know, you'll be taking piano lessons from Venus de Milo—

(then to Ned)

Get out of here.

(She pushes him good-naturedly and he leaves)

Denby

Everything O.K.?

Sally

Just what the doctor ordered.

She glances around the large cabin which has been turned into an office for the Master of Ceremonies. It contains the usual paraphernalia, including stacks of music orchestrations, a few theatrical photographs, a violin in a case, a portable mike, etc.

SALLY

(looking around)

Looks like your old workshop back on 42d Street.

DENBY

Like it?

SALLY

Swell—You've got Times Square right here—all but the noises—

DENBY

Yep—spending lots of time aboard—you see, Sally, I sold this Transatlantic idea to the shipping company.

SALLY

And you've put it over—haven't you?

DENBY

Why not? I give 'em a great show—and you know—We're doing capacity, Sally—and all *Nice* people—

SALLY

(admiringly)

You never fail at anything, do you, Chad?

DENBY

No—not much—excepting—

(looks at her steadily)

SALLY

(glances at her picture on wall)

Still got my picture, I see—I was pretty dumb then, wasn't I, Chad?

DENBY

No—Inexperienced—

(looks at picture)

A red-headed kid—homemade clothes—Broadway was Paradise—and a slot at the Automat was a Banquet.

SALLY

I came to tell you what a swell guy I think you are to do this—

66

DENBY

Do what—

SALLY

(places her hand on his arm affectionately)

You made it possible for us to get away at a few hours' notice—you never asked why, but I guess you know.

DENBY

News travels fast on Broadway—you had to get away from a rat—

SALLY

It wasn't only that—Ned was in a jam.

DENBY

I get it—Lee Lother have a hand in that, too?

SALLY

(nodding)

I was so crazy about him—anything he did or said was O.K. by me.

(She avoids his eye)

I introduced him to people—even after I knew his stock promoting was phoney and the card games were crooked. It didn't seem to matter—I didn't care—

(her voice lowers)

—until he roped Ned in. Some confidence game—and the kid left his fingerprints on a drinking glass.

DENBY

I felt pretty low, Sally, when I heard you were running around with a racketeer—

SALLY

(with a wan smile)

Women have a curious taste for knickknacks. When I found out about Ned—tried to make a break—Lee wouldn't stand for it and—well—here I am!

DENBY

Stay on the other side of the pond for a couple of months—you'll soon forget all about it.

SALLY

Chad Denby broadcasting—

(She kisses him lightly on the cheek)

—the nicest man I ever knew—

DENBY

But not nice enough to marry—eh?

SALLY
(coaxingly)
Come on, now—you've forgotten all about that.

DENBY
I'll never love anybody else.

Sally looks at him a moment before speaking—her eyes are moist.

SALLY
(moodily)
Women are such fools!—Why do so many of us pass up *right* guys?

DENBY
Guess they're dull—nothing for you to reform.

CUT TO:

67 INQUIRY OFFICE—BRETT AND SHIP'S CLERK

BRETT
Can you give me names of the people in the show?

CLERK
(thinking)
Well, sir—there's—

BRETT
—don't bother.

68 REVERSE ANGLE—CLOSE SHOT—BRETT

Looking up at the wall above the clerk's head. He smiles.

CUT TO:

69 WHAT HE SEES

An announcement of the entertainers in a frame. It includes a photograph of Sally with her name under it.

CUT TO:

70 TWO-SHOT—BRETT AND CLERK

BRETT
Sally Marsh is the lady I'm looking for—where's her cabin?

CLERK
51C—around to the left—second tier.

Almost before he finishes, Brett is on his way. Lother comes into scene and addresses the clerk.

LOTHER

What stateroom has Miss Marsh?

CLERK

Miss Sally Marsh?—51C.

LOTHER

Where would that be?

CLERK

Around to the left, sir—second tier.

LOTHER

(as he moves off)

Thanks.

CUT TO:

71 CLOSE-UP OF ANYA

CUT TO:

72 CORRIDOR—STATEROOMS ON EITHER SIDE

Lother is on his way to find Sally—Brett a few yards ahead of him with the same purpose in mind. As Lother passes a cabin the door opens quickly and Anya steps in the corridor.

73 CLOSE-UP OF NED

Watching.

74 CLOSE SHOT—ANYA

ANYA

Looking for me?

75 REVERSE SHOT—LOTHER

Unable to believe his eyes, it is a moment before he speaks. During this, Brett continues down the corridor.

LOTHER

Anya!

76 TWO-SHOT

ANYA

Don't you hate people that surprise you? . . . I do.

(She slips her arm through his—looks up at him and smiles)

We can't stand here.

Lother gulps.

LOTHER

Well . . . guess we'd better have a drink on it.

(as they start to walk)

CUT TO:

77 BRETT KNOCKING BRISKLY ON THE DOOR OF 51C.

No answer. He knocks again. A stewardess comes out of Sally's room.

STEWARDESS

The lady is not in her cabin, sir.

Brett looks disappointed, leans against the opposite wall, and fishes for a cigarette.

BRETT

Thank you.

Looks around—exits.

CUT TO:

78 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—LEE LOTHER AND ANYA ROSSON.

Sitting in wicker chairs, in a quiet part of the palm court. Anya's mood is very gay. She smiles at Lee. His is very thoughtful—and none too pleasant. The music is playing and passengers are dancing.

ANYA

You're still surprised, aren't you?

LOTHER

Anya, I think you're crazy.

ANYA

Any woman's crazy to feel about a man the way I do about you.

LOTHER

I wasn't running out on you. When I got over there—made my plans—I'd have sent for you.

She smiles disbelievingly. She is in love with Lee and quite contented as long as she's with him.

ANYA

Then why the sudden exit without even telling me?

LOTHER

Do you want the truth, Anya?

ANYA

(sweetly)

It would be a nice change from you.

LOTHER

I had an idea your husband was getting suspicious.

ANYA

(gaily)

You're a charming liar. You *know* Herbert's too dull to be suspicious about anything—even when I suddenly decided to come to Europe at a few hours' notice—

LOTHER

How'd you ever get away with it?

ANYA

When I found out you were going I just had an attack of nerves—a few tears—and Herbert was on his way downtown to get my passport . . . so who cares . . . I'm here with you . . . and that's all that matters to me.

LOTHER

(half-heartedly)

Sure!

ANYA

(with a smile)

I never want to go back. . . .

The steward arrives with the drinks.

ANYA

(raising her glass)

Here's to Europe!

(They drink—she gives him a quick look—her tone is sharper)

Couldn't try to look a little less glum, could you?

LOTHER

Don't be crazy—I'm tickled to death to see you.

ANYA

That's fine—because you're going to see a lot of me . . . for the rest of your life.

79 DOLLY BACK FROM ANYA AND LOTHER TO A MEDIUM SHOT OF PALM COURT FROM DECK ANGLE

Brett is coming along the deck. As he enters Palm Court he bumps into a man who is just leaving.

BRETT

I beg your pardon.

He looks up.

80 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT

The man is Inspector McKinney.

McKINNEY

(genially)

Hello, young fellow. Did you find that basket of flowers?

BRETT

(with a grin as he goes out of scene)

Fruit!

McKinney watches him a moment thoughtfully.

CUT BACK TO:

81 MEDIUM SHOT—ANYA AND LOTHER

Summers is coming toward them with outstretched hands, his face beaming.

SUMMERS

How are you, Mr. Lother?

(He looks at Anya)

Not intruding, I hope?

LOTHER

This is Jack Summers—Mrs. Rosson.

Summers beams good-naturedly.

SUMMERS

A rare pleasure to meet you, ma'am! Where I come from —out in Montana—we have some pretty women, but I guess if you walked down Main Street they'd turn out the fire brigade.

ANYA

Montana?

SUMMERS

Lumber, ma'am—spent all my life out there piling up a bank balance—

(He slaps his thigh)

—and now gosh darn it—"Honest Jack"—that's what they call me—is goin' to see the world.

LOTHER

(grinning)

You're wasting your time—she's a friend of mine.

SUMMERS

(suddenly subsiding)

Eh? . . . Oh.

LOTHER
(to Anya)
He works the boats as a "come-on" man. We ought to make a fair combination and do a little business. Jack's a pretty good dealer himself.

SUMMERS
There's a lot of trout in this stream just waitin' for a fly. I've already been workin' on a young fellow from Chicago—related to one of the big packin' families—on his way to Biarritz for a good time. Likes a little game of bridge and poker.

He winks.

ANYA
(quietly)
Keep your voice down—that blonde boy is looking straight over here.

CUT TO:

82 CLOSE SHOT—BRETT

At table.

CUT BACK TO:

83 ANYA—LOTHER AND SUMMERS

SUMMERS
(looking up and lowering his voice)
That's him! That's the sucker!!

LOTHER
Looks lonesome—Bring him over here.

Summers exits.

CUT TO:

(84 out)

85 INTERIOR SECOND-CLASS BUFFET—MEDIUM CLOSE

Mr. Rosson and fellow passenger standing at bar in second-class buffet.

PASSENGER
(to Rosson—enthusiastically)
Something about an ocean voyage that makes everybody happy!

ROSSON
(evenly)
Not necessarily.

PASSENGER

Oh! Going over on business, eh?

ROSSON

(raising his eyebrow)

—Er—Yes—you might call it that—

CUT TO:

(86–90 out)

91 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—ANYA AND BRETT, LOTHER AND SUMMERS

BRETT has Anya's hand, and is looking at her bracelet.

ANYA

We'll have cocktails and then a few rubbers of bridge.

BRETT

(still looking at bracelet)

I can think of nothing nicer. It's very kind of you to invite me—

ANYA

I'm just commencing to enjoy this trip.

CUT TO:

92 OPPOSITE END OF PALM COURT

SALLY IS JUST COMING OUT OF LIBRARY. She carries a couple of books under her arm. She pauses a moment to watch the dancers through the archway.

CUT TO:

92-A MEDIUM SHOT

Suddenly Brett stares—he has seen Sally and for a moment struggles between courtesy and desire. Desire wins.

BRETT

Hmm! So am I. If you'll excuse me I have some important unfinished business. I'll see you all later.

LOTHER

We'll be expecting you.

Quickly Brett moves away. CAMERA STAYS ON ANYA for a second. Lother and Summers nod approvingly.

CUT TO:

93 ARCHWAY

Sally has not seen Brett—she moves out onto deck. A steward appears carrying a small tray of crackers.

CUT TO:

94 COMPANIONWAY LEADING TO SPORTS DECK

Sally is just about to ascend as Brett comes quickly into scene.

BRETT

Where have *you* been hiding?

SALLY

(slightly vague)

Oh—hello!

(suddenly remembering)

I got the flowers. That was sweet of you—Thank you.

BRETT

Don't thank *me*. Do you recognize me without the lipstick?

SALLY

(with mock disappointment)

So you washed it off!

BRETT

(with a grin)

How about giving me another coat?

SALLY

(She moves up a step)

Good-by.

BRETT

(quickly)

Wait a minute!—They're dancing in the palm court—

SALLY

Good-by!

BRETT

(dreamily)

There's soft music—

SALLY

(as she starts to climb)

—sorry—got an appointment to play shuffle-board.

Brett

(nonchalantly)

Have we?—Well, I'd just as soon play shuffle-board.

He takes her by the arm. Dan Campbell staggers down the stairway in background.

Denby comes to stairway.

Dan

Hello, Denby!

Denby

I thought I put you to bed.

Dan

Oh, was that me you put to bed? Thanks. I've been looking all over for you.

Denby

Well, did you find me?

Dan

Not yet.

(He continues)

Say, where is this boat headed for?

Denby

This is a fine time to be asking that. You're on your way to France.

Dan

That's news to me. I'd better cable my wife.

Denby calls a steward—it is Shortie.

Denby

Hey, boy—give this man a cablegram blank.

(continues to Dan)

Where is your wife?

Dan

She's in New York.

Shortie

Here you are, sir.

(He hands Dan cablegram blank and pencil)

Dan

(starts to write)

What'll I say?

Denby

Tell her you're on your way to France and will be back in four weeks.

DAN

That's fine.

He writes and utters aloud as he writes.

Denby exits.

CUT TO:

(95 out)

96 **INSERT**

Cablegram which reads:

"Will be back in New York in four weeks."

DAN'S VOICE

How much will that be?

97 **MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—SHORTIE AND DAN**

SHORTIE

(counting words in the cablegram)

Eighty cents a word—three—six—nine words. That'll be seven twenty, but it's too much—I'll show you how to save some money.

DAN

How?

Shortie reads cable aloud. "Will be back in New York in four weeks." He turns to Dan.

SHORTIE

Where do you live?

DAN

In New York.

SHORTIE

Your wife knows that, don't she?

DAN

Sure.

SHORTIE

Then you don't have to tell her—cut out New York.

Shortie crosses it out.

SHORTIE

(reading)

"Will be back in four weeks"—

(turns to Dan)

—that saves you eighty cents right there!

DAN

That's right—here's the eighty cents for you. I'd rather see you get it than the company—send it right off.

SHORTIE

Wait a minute—I think I can cut out a couple o' more words.

DAN

How?

SHORTIE

(reads cable aloud slowly)

"Will—be—back—in—four—weeks." You don't need the "will be." Just say "Back in four weeks."

DAN

That's right. I owe you a dollar sixty.

He hands Shortie the money.

SHORTIE

(getting enthused. He's found a soft racket)

Wait a minute—I think I can cut something else out.

(reads)

"Back in four weeks." Instead of "in four weeks"—say "next month"—That saves another word.

DAN

Right. Here's eighty cents. Send it.

He hands Shortie the money.

SHORTIE

Just a minute—I don't think we need the word "Back" —Where *is* "Back"?

DAN

Back is in New York.

SHORTIE

Your wife knows that, don't she?

DAN

Sure.

SHORTIE

Cut it out.

He crosses the word out.

SHORTIE

(looking at cable)

Now we get it down to two words—"next month."

DAN

Send that.

SHORTIE

Wait a minute—What *is* next month?

DAN

Next month is June.

SHORTIE

Fine! Instead of saying "next month"—we'll use one word and say "June."

DAN

June? That's my wife's name.

SHORTIE

That's great! There's the address and message all in one word.

DAN

O. K.! Send that!

SHORTIE

Just a minute—Your wife knows her own name, doesn't she?

DAN

Sure.

SHORTIE

Well, there's no use in sending it.

(He tears up cable)

See that—I saved you seven twenty!

DAN

Well. I'd rather see *you* get it than the company.

He hands Shortie the money.

CUT TO:

98 LONG SHOT—SPORTS DECK

Four attractive girls are squealing excitedly as they play deck tennis in shorts.

99 MEDIUM SHOT—BRETT AND SALLY

As they move along the deck.

BRETT

This is great. I'll be able to watch your act every night.

SALLY

You're not very ambitious, are you?

BRETT

Oh, yes, I am, because *afterwards*—up here in the moonlight.

SALLY

You work too fast for me, young man.

BRETT
(sincerely)
Aw—give a feller a break. My cards are on the table—I want to know you. How about dining with me tonight?

SALLY
Never eat before the show.

BRETT
Well—breakfast?
(She laughs and shakes her head)
Lunch?

By this time they arrive into:

100 DENBY AND MCKINNEY STANDING BY SHUFFLEBOARD

SALLY'S VOICE
Sorry I'm late.

As she comes into scene, pursued by Brett, Denby turns.

DENBY
(giving Brett the once-over)
I was just about to start a game with this gentleman.

McKinney turns.

MCKINNEY
(introduces himself)
McKinney's the name.

DENBY
(introduces Sally)
Miss Marsh.

She acknowledges introduction.

SALLY
(introduces Brett)
This is Mr.—er—

BRETT
Brett is the name.

SALLY
Mr. Denby and Mr. McKinney.

They all shake hands.

MCKINNEY
I think I've met you before, Mr. Brett.

BRETT
(smiling)
Oh, yes. On the pier.

McKINNEY
(smiling, but looking straight into his eyes)
Before that. Your face is very familiar.

BRETT
Yours, too. Are you the McKinney, the dentist on Calumet Avenue in Chicago?

McKINNEY
(smiling)
No—not quite.

DENBY
(facetiously)
Their faces are familiar—but not to each other.

BRETT
(smiles)
Now that that's settled, why not make the game a foursome?

They all agree.

AD-LIB
Fine! . . . O. K.!

BRETT
Miss Marsh and I will play against you two.

DENBY
No—I'll take Sally and give you the best of it.

BRETT
Tell you what I'll do.
(He takes a coin out of his pocket)
I'll toss you for her—heads she plays with me.

DENBY
O. K. Heads you win.

Brett flips coin; it comes heads. A medicine ball comes whizzing through the air striking him squarely on the head. He drops the coin and falls into the arms of McKinney. They both stagger with the impact. Denby picks up the coin that Brett dropped.

CUT TO:

101 **INSERT OF COIN IN DENBY'S PALM**

It has two heads on it.

101A **CLOSE-UP—REACTION OF DENBY**

CUT TO:

102 **BRETT**

He is rubbing his head.

DENBY

(with polite sarcasm)

That's too bad.

BRETT

(rubbing his head)

I'm O. K. It didn't hurt much.

DENBY

(glances at the two-headed coin)

I'm sorry to hear that.

SALLY

(reprimands Denby)

I think you're very unkind.

At this point a young fellow in athletic shirt enters.

YOUNG FELLOW

(to Brett, apologetically)

I'm awfully sorry.

DENBY

(interrupting the Young Fellow)

That's perfectly all right. Don't mention it.

The young man exits.

SALLY

(to Denby—obviously peeved)

You're just a Master of Ceremonies. He might have knocked his head off.

DENBY

(laughing)

What's the difference? He's got more heads than he needs.

SALLY

(puzzled)

I don't get the humor of that remark.

DENBY

(looking at Brett)

He does. Here's your quarter Brett.

He tosses the coin to him. Brett catches it and nods his thanks.

CUT TO:

103 BRETT AND SALLY

While walking.

BRETT

Is there a bump on my head?

She runs her hand through his hair.

SALLY

Don't feel any—yes, I do!—Oh—that's a shame.

She rubs his head gently then stops.

BRETT

Don't stop, nurse—I think I'm going to faint.

SALLY

You *are* a lunatic!

BRETT

Even cupid's becoming modern, using medicine balls instead of darts.

She pushes him aside and takes her shot. The following dialogue is read as they each shoot down three disks—Sally being very businesslike with her shots—Brett seldom taking his eyes off Sally.

BRETT

You know, you're not a *bad*-looking girl. In fact—I think you're lovely.

SALLY

Keep your eyes on the ball, Mister.

BRETT

Married?

SALLY

Nothing to speak of. What is this—third degree?

BRETT

I want you to get used to my voice—you're going to hear it a lot.

SALLY

What a horrible death! Do you know what you remind me of?

BRETT
(hopefully)
Tell me.

SALLY
A little boy that has escaped from his nurse and—

BRETT
(interrupts)
—you want to adopt him!—Good for you!

He drops his punter and shakes her heartily by the hand. She shakes her head at him and grins.

CUT TO:

104 MEDIUM CLOSE DENBY AND McKINNEY

DENBY
Here we are, folks—eighty thousand wild-eyed fans go mad—they go *mad* as Chad Denby—with the arms of iron, and the nerves of steel—picks up his racket—
(to McKinney)
What is this thing—a racket or a mallet?

McKINNEY
Looks to me like standard equipment for the Department of Street Cleaning—

DENBY
(looks toward Brett and Sally obviously jealous and annoyed)
Too bad we're not making a trip around the world—maybe we could finish this game.
(He then yells to Brett)
Hey! When you get through with that conference, shoot that last disk!

CUT BACK TO:

105 SALLY AND BRETT

BRETT
Watch this one.

He takes a careful shot. CAMERA FOLLOWS the disk down the deck. It scatters the others and lands dead center in a ring.

McKINNEY'S VOICE
Nice shot!

CAMERA PULLS BACK AND FOCUSES ON McKinney and Denby as they start returning the disks from their end.

McKINNEY

You can always tell how much a man's traveled by the way he plays shuffle-board.

DENBY

Yeah—if he'd only stick to shuffle-board.

FOLLOW THEIR FIRST SHOT back to Sally and Brett, then PULL BACK TO SEMIWIDE SHOT. During the following dialogue the disks are being shot at their feet from the opposite side. Anya comes into scene. She smiles sarcastically at Brett as she approaches him.

ANYA

Feeling a little better, I see.

BRETT

Yes, yes—the air—

(He looks at Sally)

—I'm getting plenty of air.

(He introduces them)

Miss Marsh—Mrs. Rosson.

SALLY

How do you do. Would you care to finish the game? I have a slight earache.

(She looks at Brett)

—and it's so noisy up here.

ANYA

Thanks, no. I despise any form of exercise.

(to Brett)

Don't forget we have an engagement for cocktails and cards.

BRETT

Thanks. I'll be there. About seven-thirty?

ANYA

(vamping)

Sooner—if you like.

(to Sally)

See you again, I hope.

She crosses to the other side of the deck.

BRETT
(trying to get a rise out of Sally)
Isn't she attractive?

SALLY
(drily)
Very—your mother?

BRETT
Don't be a c-a-t.

SALLY
You asked me to dine with you tonight.

BRETT
Yes?

SALLY
Well, I can't.

BRETT
Don't rub it in.

SALLY
But I'll have cocktails with you.

BRETT
When?

SALLY
At seven-thirty?

BRETT
Sooner if you like.

SALLY
Okay.

BRETT
Fatal fascination of James Brett wins out.

SALLY
(quickly)
Wrong again—
(She looks out of picture in the direction
that Anya left)
But I dislike possessive women.

She turns and looks at him—they both grin, then giggle, and end up with a good laugh.

DISSOLVE TO:

106 SMOKING ROOM

The competitors, Denby, Brett, Sally, and McKinney are seated at the table in the order named. The steward has just placed the cool drinks in front of them. He hands the check to Brett. McKinney grabs it.

McKINNEY

No! no! You trimmed us. The drinks are on me.

(He feels in his pocket, looks a little surprised, then feels in his other pocket)

That's funny, I must have left my wallet in the cabin.

DENBY

(grabs the check)

That's all right. I'll attend to this.

BRETT

Wait a minute—let's match for it.

DENBY

Never mind—I'll pay for it now. It'll save time.

SALLY

(rising)

Well—thanks for the game and the drinks, and now if you'll excuse me—

107 TRAVEL SHOT

As Brett follows Sally.

BRETT

See you at seven-thirty in the lounge.

SALLY

I'll be there—Good-by.

She exits.

CUT BACK TO:

107A CLOSE-UP—REACTION OF DENBY TAKING THIS.

CUT TO:

108 TABLE

McKINNEY

(to Denby)

Those kids seem to be getting along fine!—

DENBY

It must be the sea air—it gets everybody.

McKINNEY

He's a likable chap—he's got an honest face—

DENBY

It's all right—if you like honest faces—Let's have another drink—Steward!

MCKINNEY

Oh no—I don't want to impose on you—

(half to himself)

It's funny about that billfold—I could have sworn I had it—

(Again he taps his pockets)

DISSOLVE TO:

109 AN OPEN BILLFOLD AND A HAND EXTRACTING A FIFTY-DOLLAR BILL

PULL CAMERA BACK TO MEDIUM SHOT. Brett is in his cabin in Tuxedo trousers and dress shirt. He hands the bill to Shortie who looks slightly surprised.

SHORTIE

(with wide eyes)

Where'd you get the dough?

Brett waves the pocketbook and grins.

BRETT

Inspector McKinney.

SHORTIE

Are you screwy?

BRETT

I fell in his arms—Couldn't resist it.

SHORTIE

You know where that sense of humor's goin' to get you one of these days—

Brett throws him the pocketbook.

BRETT

Here—drop it where they'll find it and return it to him. He's not a bad egg. I'll ship him back the fifty before we arrive.

SHORTIE

(takes pocketbook)

You take some awful chances.

BRETT

Well, I had to get some dough to play with those suckers. Here, get this changed.

He hands Shortie the fifty-dollar bill.

BRETT

Get a lot of one's and a couple of five's. It'll be a good flash.

Brett picks up a deck of cards and riffles them expertly.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

110 PURSER'S OFFICE—SHORTIE AND MCKINNEY

MCKINNEY

(presenting check to purser)

Will you cash a fifty-dollar American Express check for me?

SHORTIE

(to Purser)

And will you please give me thirty one's and two ten's for this?

(He hands him the fifty-dollar bill)

The Purser takes the fifty from Shortie and hands it to McKinney.

PURSER

(to McKinney)

There you are, sir.

MCKINNEY

Thank you.

PURSER

(to Shortie)

Thirty one's and two ten's?

SHORTIE

Yes, sir.

The Purser starts to count out Shortie's change as we

DISSOLVE TO:

111 MEDIUM CLOSE—LOTHER AND SUMMERS

In Anya's cabin.

Lother and Summers are seated at table. Anya is curled up on the divan with a generous display of shapely legs. Lother and Summers are examining carefully the backs of a deck of playing cards. Summers picks up a card and a smile of satisfaction lights his countenance.

LOTHER

Can you read 'em Jack?

SUMMERS

They're a cinch to read—Queen of Clubs—

(We see the hand turn over the Queen of Clubs)

—Ace of Diamonds.

(Hand turns up the Ace of Diamonds)

112 MEDIUM FULL SHOT

LOTHER

The man that marks them is an artist—two hundred and fifty bucks for six decks—and they're worth it.

SUMMERS

(looking at his watch)

The country boy's about due.

LOTHER

Better unlock the door.

(then to Anya)

Sit up, darling, and be dignified.

113 MEDIUM SHOT—INTERIOR OF BRETT'S CABIN

Shortie and Brett. Shortie has the change for Brett's fifty-dollar bill.

SHORTIE

Here y'are. Now don't take too many chances on that card game.

BRETT

(smiling)

They won't squawk—they're professionals.

SHORTIE

(shrugs his shoulders)

Well, if that's the case, you're sure of winning the first couple of hands—But what about after that?

BRETT

That's where you come in. Now, listen, Shortie—

DISSOLVE TO:

114 INTERIOR OF ANYA'S CABIN

LOTHER

(to Anya)

And don't forget—you won't play cards because you've got a headache. After the three of us get started you can scram.

(to Summers)

Give him the come-on—let him win the first few hands. When I give you the office

(he pulls the lobe of his ear)

—Start taking him.

There is a knock at the door. In a flash Lother is at the table playing "Patience." Summers is sitting next to Anya. Another knock.

SUMMERS

(in a loud voice as he starts toward the door)

—that's what we call double-A grade lumber, ma'm; You don't find a knot in a thousand feet.

ANYA

Isn't that interesting?

Another knock.

SUMMERS

Come in!

(He opens the door)

BRETT

(standing at threshold)

Hope I didn't keep you waiting.

Shortie passes in the corridor. Brett sees him and calls.

BRETT

Oh, boy—

Shortie comes into scene. Brett reaches in his pocket and pulls out a check.

BRETT

Have the purser give you twenty-five hundred dollars for this check—and bring the cash here.

SHORTIE

Yes, Mr. Brett—right away.

Shortie leaves with check.

Lother and Summers and Anya react by exchanging glances.

ANYA

Good afternoon—

BRETT

(looking at bracelet)

Glad to see you again.

Brett seats himself next to Anya while Summers and Lother start to pour drinks.

ANYA

(sweetly)

Do you mind if I don't play? I've a beastly headache.

She puts her hand on her forehead and Brett gazes longingly at the bracelet on her wrist.

LOTHER

But, Anya, dear! Unless you play we won't have a fourth.

ANYA

(rises)

I'm sorry, but you three men can play poker or something.

(She turns to Brett)

Shall I see you tomorrow?

BRETT

I hope so.

ANYA

That's a date.

(She extends her hand)

Brett shakes it gently and it is evident that the bracelet fascinates him.

ANYA

(to others)

You'll excuse me.

(She exits)

SUMMERS

Well, it'll have to be poker—but I'm so unlucky in that game.

BRETT

(timidly)

If you gentlemen play a heavy game, perhaps you'd better count me out.

Summers and Lother exchange disappointed glances.

BRETT

(smiling apologetically)

I never play higher than—say a $200 limit.

Lother and Summers are obviously delighted.

LOTHER

(apologetically)

We haven't any chips, Mr. Brett—Do you mind playing with cash?

BRETT

Not at all.

It is difficult for Lother and Summers to conceal their glee as they pull their chairs up to the table. The cards are shuffled by Summers. He places them in front of Lother for the cut. Lother cuts the cards and Summers deals them.

LAP DISSOLVE:

115 MEDIUM CLOSE—BRETT

BRETT

I'll bet a couple of hundred—

(glances toward door)

I wonder what's keeping that boy.

SUMMERS

(magnanimously)

Don't worry about that.

(He throws in a couple hundred)

We'll settle after the hand. Out in Montana where I come from a man's word is all that's necessary. What have you got?

BRETT

(showing his hand)

Three Jacks.

SUMMERS

(good-naturedly)

That beats two pairs. I'm glad *I* didn't win the first pot. Take the money, Mr. Brett.

Brett scoops in the stakes.

BRETT

Well, I'm off to a pretty good start.

LOTHER

If I ever won a pot that large the boat would sink.

(takes the cards and starts to deal)

SUMMERS

Well, as I said before, I don't like to win the first pot. Out my way in Montana we're very superstitious—we always say a good beginning is a bad ending.

(He addresses Brett and laughs)

I hope that won't apply to you.

Shortie comes into scene with thirty one-dollar bills and two ten's rolled up in such a manner that it looks like twenty million.

SHORTIE

Here's your twenty-five hundred, Mr. Brett.

BRETT

(takes it)

Thank you.

(he peels a ten dollar bill from the top of the roll)

I owe you a dollar forty—here— keep the change.

SHORTIE

Thank you, sir.

(He exits)

BRETT

I'll take one.

(Lother deals him a card)

SUMMERS

One will be enough for me.

Lother deals him one.

LOTHER

I should pass, but I'll trail along—I'll take three.

(He takes three)

BRETT

I'll bet a couple of hundred.

SUMMERS

Out my way in Montana we always call a bluff.

(He throws two hundred into the pot)

LOTHER

Well, I helped my hand so I'll have to see you.

BRETT

(showing his hand)

Aces full.

LOTHER

And me coming in with two pair—

(sighs)

SUMMERS

I thought my straight was O.K., but—

(sighs)

Brett scoops in the money. Lother's hand goes to his ear for the high sign to Summers.

SUMMERS

(to Brett)

It's your deal.

BRETT

It's a pleasure.

As he starts to deal the cards there is a knock on the door.

LOTHER

Come in!

Shortie enters.

SHORTIE

Sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Brett, but I have a message for you.

BRETT

(shuffling cards)

What is it?

SHORTIE

Your mother is feeling seasick and would like to see you right away.

BRETT

(much concerned)

Oh, is she? What a shame!

(He rises, puts the money in his pocket)

You'll pardon me?

LOTHER

(quickly)

You're coming back—

BRETT

That depends on how mother's feeling. You'll excuse me, gentlemen?

He leaves followed by Shortie. The two men rise slowly and look at each other and then toward the door.

LOTHER
(to Summers)
How much did you lose?

SUMMERS
About twelve hundred.

LOTHER
I went for four.

SUMMERS
It's a long trip and we'll get that sucker later.

They exit.

CUT TO:

116 MEDIUM CLOSE TRUCK SHOT — BRETT AND SHORTIE

Walking down corridor.

SHORTIE
What did you win?

BRETT
About sixteen hundred.

SHORTIE
Partners, ain't we?

BRETT
Sure—and to show you I'm a regular fella—
(He extracts the roll that Shortie brought into him out of his pocket)
Here's that twenty-five hundred.
(He turns down the corridor to the left, leaving Shortie speechless)

CAMERA STAYS WITH BRETT FOR TRUCK SHOT to Florist shop at the end of corridor. He writes on a card and hands it to florist.

BRETT
(pointing to a large bouquet of roses)
See that Miss Sally Marsh gets that bouquet with my card immediately.

He tosses a bill on the counter.

BRETT
If there's any change, keep it.

FLORIST
Thank you. I'll attend to it right away.

WIPE TO:

117 INTERIOR SALLY'S CABIN

She is standing at a large bouquet reading the card that is attached.

CUT TO:

118 INSERT: CARD—"These roses are beautiful, but they run second to you. Don't forget we have a date. I'm waiting with love.

Jimmy."

Sally smiles sweetly and buries her face in the roses. Her brother Ned is seated with his back to her and she doesn't notice that he is evidently worried. She can't see his face. She approaches him and embraces him.

SALLY

Isn't it great to be away from it all? Aren't you happy? It seems too good to be true.

NED

(turns and pats her hand affectionately—he smiles to hide his innermost feelings)

Sure, Sis.

SALLY

Aren't the roses beautiful?

The phone rings, interrupting whatever Ned might have said. Sally answers the phone.

CUT TO:

119 CLOSE SHOT—AS SALLY ANSWERS TELEPHONE

SALLY

Hello! . . . Yes, it is. . . .

CUT TO:

120 CLOSE SHOT—SUMMERS AT PHONE

SUMMERS

This is the ship's photographer speaking—could I get a couple of pictures of you for the *Radio News?* . . . Thanks very much . . . Cabin 4C . . . Right away? . . . Thanks.

121 FULL SHOT

SUMMERS

She's comin'.

LOTHER

Beat it.

Summers exits.

CUT TO:

122 LOUNGE

Brett walks to a table in the lounge. He looks at his watch. He watches the entrance expectantly. Dan Campbell enters.

DAN

(staggering over to Brett)

Don't you hate a pest?

BRETT

I certainly do—

DAN

So do I. There are times when a fellow likes to be alone.

BRETT

(impatiently)

I'd like to be alone right now.

DAN

So would I. Let's sit down and talk it over.

He sits down. Steward enters.

BRETT

(to steward)

Will you try and locate Miss Marsh, please?

STEWARD

Yes, sir.

(He leaves)

CUT BACK TO:

123 LOTHER'S CABIN

There is a knock at the door. Lother opens it in such a way that he is almost behind it. Sally enters. He closes the door quickly. He smiles. She stands staring at him speechless. There is a pause.

LOTHER

Well—aren't you going to say something? I've gone to a lot of trouble to give you this little surprise.

(She makes a quick move to leave—he
leans against the door)

Don't let's behave like children. Sit down, Sally. Let's face the situation.

SALLY

(deciding to face the issue)

All right—but what is there to face? It's finished.

LOTHER

You ran away because you were afraid. I don't want it to end like that.

SALLY

I didn't want to see you again—that's my privilege.

LOTHER

It wasn't smart. Even if you'd gotten away without me —I'd have found you—no matter where you were.

SALLY

(her voice staccato)

Why don't you leave me alone?

LOTHER

(He moves close to her)

Because I want you—will *always* want you—no other woman'll ever take your place.

(His voice is tense with emotion)

I want you more now than I did that first night—

(He puts his arms around her—she tries to push him away)

You've forgotten all that, I suppose?

SALLY

I wish I could.

LOTHER

Get wise to yourself, Sally—you're no sob story.

Sally wrenches herself free. Her voice is tense with emotion.

SALLY

You get wise to *yourself!* If you know what's good for you, you'll leave me alone. Everybody's entitled to one mistake—Well—you're mine. When the going got too rough, I pulled up stakes and quit. We stay quit!—Get that!—And what're you going to do about it?

LOTHER

That's more like the old Sally—a little bit of fire.

(casually, lighting a cigarette)

How about Ned?

SALLY

He's all right.

LOTHER

Thanks to me.

SALLY

You leave the kid alone.

LOTHER

A tip-off in the right quarter to take his fingerprints and—

SALLY

—you'd go with him!

LOTHER

Don't kid yourself—you know how I stand back there.

He picks up the passenger list.

CUT TO:

124 CLOSE SHOT

As his fingers trace down the names. He stops underneath that of Inspector McKinney.

LOTHER'S VOICE

Why do you think he's aboard?

CUT TO:

125 MEDIUM SHOT (TWO)

SALLY

Not because of Ned.

LOTHER

Of course not—

(politely)

—but isn't it a coincidence that he's from the eighteenth precinct—where they made the squawk?

SALLY

You can't bluff me any more.

CUT BACK TO:

126 BRETT AND DAN IN LOUNGE

BRETT

(trying to be polite)

I'm sorry, Mr. Campbell, but I'm waiting for someone. I'd appreciate it if you'd—

At this point Mary enters; sees Dan.

Mary enters scene on way to rehearsal, with paper in her hand.

MARY

Oh, there you are—

DAN

That's right—you're the one I was looking for.

(to Brett)

You'll excuse me.

(Brett reacts relief)

(back to Mary)

How about you and I being alone?

MARY

Not now, Toots—Which is the right way to say this? You're dumber than me—or—you're dumber than I?

DAN

Let me see now—Don't tell me—

(trying to figure out)

You're dumber than me and I'm dumber than you. I don't get it.

MARY

Never mind.

She continues reading. Denby enters and sees Mary.

DENBY

H'mm . . . no wonder I have trouble rounding up this show—Don't you know there's a rehearsal going on?—And you wanted a raise.—Come on—get going or you'll get it!

MARY

Oh, all right—

(to Dan)

See you later, Toots.

DAN

Nobody is any help to me at all.

Mary exits followed by Dan.

BRETT

Oh, Denby—have you seen Sally around?

DENBY

No—I'm looking for Miss Marsh myself. I thought you might know where she is—

BRETT

She was to meet me here—why don't you wait? She ought to be here any minute.

DENBY

I would—but our rehearsal starts right away.

(starts to leave)

Before I go I want to ask you a little favor. Sally is an important part of my show. Some day—not now—when you get a chance—let her come to just one rehearsal. I'll appreciate it.

Brett reacts with a grin, as Denby exits toward rehearsal room.

CUT TO:

126A MEDIUM SHOT—CORRIDOR

Denby meets Ned, on way to rehearsal room.

DENBY

Seen Sally?

NED

She went over to the ship's photographers.

CUT TO:

127 LOTHER'S CABIN

Sally is sitting on the lounge, Lother next to her. The fight seems to have gone out of her and she looks desperately unhappy.

SALLY

I'm crazy about the kid and I got him into it.

(She looks at him)

What do you want me to do?

LOTHER

Just smile again and be reasonable.

(his voice cajoling)

I'll order dinner here—just the two of us—like old times.

SALLY

—and you swear when you get to the other side, you'll never come near either of us again?

LOTHER

That's a bet—but I couldn't let you walk out like that, Sally. I'd have gone cuckoo back there—just thinking about you—

He puts his arm around her—tries to draw her to him.

SALLY

Don't, Lee—that's dead.

LOTHER

(grabbing her)

Let's see if I can bring it back to life.

Hungrily his lips meet hers. She tries to struggle but his arms are tight about her. He bends her back across the lounge, his lips still to hers. Slowly her resistance ceases. Her arms drop limp. He kisses her eyes, her throat, then back to her lips. She remains inanimate. Suddenly he lets her go and stands towering over her in a fury.

LOTHER

So it's as cold as that, is it?

CUT TO:

128 THE DOOR

It opens quickly and Anya enters. Behind her stands Summers. She takes in the situation. An ironical little smile plays about the corner of her mouth. Summers, behind her, is signaling to Lother that he couldn't help it. They enter the room.

CUT TO:

129 FULL SHOT

Anya eyes Lother with a deadly calm.

ANYA

Hope we're not intruding.

LOTHER

(ill at ease)

This is Miss Marsh.

ANYA

Yes—I met Miss Marsh. In fact, she always seems to be turning up in the most unusual circumstances.

(solicitously)

What's the matter, Miss Marsh—aren't you feeling well?

There is a long, awkward pause.

ANYA

(gaily)

Well—shall we go into dinner?

LOTHER

I'll join you later.

ANYA

And *do* bring Miss Marsh—

(She surveys the disheveled Sally)

—when she's had time to tidy up a bit.

SALLY

(jumping to her feet)

You're Anya Rosson, aren't you?
I've heard of you back in New York.

ANYA

(ironically)

Sorry I can't return the compliment.

SALLY

You were indiscreet enough to leave your gloves in my apartment one evening—

(She points to Lother)

—and he was gentleman enough to boast *why* you'd been there and show me a snapshot of you.

ANYA

I don't understand.

SALLY

I think you do.

She goes quickly to the door and turns.

CUT TO:

130 CLOSE SHOT—SALLY—AS SHE TURNS

SALLY

I was jealous of you *then*—I'm *sorry* for you now.

She exits, closing the door.

CUT TO:

131 FULL SHOT

ANYA

So that's your little dancer that you were playing around with in New York.

(She shrugs)

Oh—there's no accounting for tastes—

(She eyes him up and down)

—mine, too, seem to be in the gutter.

LOTHER

I can explain—

ANYA

Sure! You're never at a loss for words.

SUMMERS

Will you pardon me?

ANYA

Gladly.

LOTHER

Scram!

Summers makes a beeline for the door and exits.

ANYA

Don't look so uncomfortable, Lee—it interferes with your good looks. Give me a cigarette.

(as he lights it for her)

What did you do—persuade her to come on this voyage with you?

LOTHER

Don't talk such bunk! She's one of the acts on the ship. I just ran into her by accident.

ANYA

(sweetly)

Did you muss up her hair by accident, too?

LOTHER

You mind your own business! She's an old friend of mine and I like her—what're you going to do about it?

ANYA

(with a smile)

Just make it as difficult as possible for you to see her.

LOTHER

I didn't ask you to come away with me—

ANYA

Oh—a hundred times—

LOTHER

(furiously)

—and I can tell you where to get off.

ANYA

And when you do I'll convey your respects by wireless to Herbert.

(She smiles sweetly)

Take it easy, Lee—no other woman'll ever get you. At least I'm honest when I tell you there must be something pretty low down in me—because I like you.

(He throws himself on the lounge and puffs at his cigarette. She sits on the lounge—strokes his face)

You're such a swine!

LOTHER

Will you leave me alone?

ANYA

(laughing as she pinches his cheek)

I like touching you—poison ivy.

(Suddenly the banter leaves her voice)

You'd just been kissing that girl when I came in, hadn't you?

LOTHER

Boloney!

ANYA

No, darling, lip rouge—all over your mouth.

CUT TO:

132 LARGE CLOSE SHOT—ANYA'S HEAD

As she bends slowly toward him.

ANYA

(slowly)

Let me wipe it off for you.

(She kisses him sensuously, then looks at him, her eyes blazing)

I adore you—you gorilla!

She slaps his face none too gently.

LOTHER

And I'm nuts about you—

(He pinches her face roughly)

—beautiful!

He returns her slap in the face playfully—but with interest.

ANYA

(breathlessly)

I couldn't *live* without you!

Again she hits him across the face but this time with all her force. Before he can retaliate she has again fastened her lips to his. We see his clenched fist in the air hesitate a moment then relax. His arms go about her—he crushes her to him.

CUT TO:

133 **Brett and Mary—Lounge**

Brett is very nervous and impatient. He paces back and forth.

Mary

Why don't you answer my question?

Brett

(impatiently)

I didn't even hear it.

Mary

Then I'll repeat it.

Brett continues pacing to and fro.

Mary

If spinach makes iron, what makes a boat *rock?*

Brett

(uninterested)

Who cares?

Mary

(laughing)

I'll have to tell that to Denby. He'll use it on the radio.

Denby passes by door and hears remark.

Denby

(sticking head in door)

I don't know what it is, but I won't use it.

(then to Brett)

Is she entertaining you?

Brett

I should say not.

Denby

Good!

(then to Mary)

At last you're making yourself useful. So long!

Denby leaves. A steward enters.

Steward

No, sir—she's not on the upper deck either.

Brett

(handing him a bill)

Thank you.

(to Mary)

You'll excuse me, please—

He walks away toward dining room.

Dissolve to:

134 MEDIUM CLOSE AS BRETT EXITS FROM SCENE WITH MARY HE SEES SALLY, WHO IS WALKING DEJECTEDLY.

BRETT

(calling)

Oh, Sally!

SALLY

(enters apologizing)

I'm sorry I'm late, but something happened.

BRETT

You're forgiven if you don't make dates with anybody except me for the rest of the voyage.

SALLY

I must say you're persistent—

(pleased)

—it's kind of flattering.

Occasionally a passenger passes them but the deck is more or less deserted.

BRETT

(studying her)

You're unhappy about something, aren't you?

She hesitates before replying.

SALLY

A little.

BRETT

Sorry.

SALLY

Thanks.

BRETT

Anything I can do?

(She shakes her head)

I'd jump overboard if it'd help *you*.

She puts her hand over his and pats it.

SALLY

Mighty decent of you, pal.

BRETT

Decent?

(His expression hardens)

I guess any guy could be decent—if you were interested.

They stop near lifeboat (PROCESS SHOT).

SALLY

(suddenly)

What are you thinking?

BRETT

A lot of things I'd like to forget.

SALLY

That's funny—so was I.

(Another pause)

Guess the ocean makes one sentimental.

BRETT

I can't blame the ocean—it's you.

SALLY

You don't know anything about me. If you did, you probably wouldn't be here.

He leans toward her—their heads are very close together.

BRETT

Can you keep a secret?

(She nods)

You're the first girl I ever met I wanted to build a fence around.

She looks at him steadily.

SALLY

Don't kid me. I'm in no mood for it.

BRETT

For once I'm dead on the level—

(He lowers his voice)

—crazy about you!

SALLY

Will you take some advice?

(He nods)

If you're looking for romance—count me out—

(as an afterthought)

—if you know what's good for you.

BRETT

But—

SALLY

—I know what I'm talking about. I'm no high-school girl looking through a window—reaching for the moon.

(She starts to rise)

Guess I'll be going.

BRETT
(detaining her)

Sally—!

SALLY

Let's forget it—can't you see I kind of like you, too . . . and I don't want to get involved.

BRETT
(eagerly)

You mean that?

SALLY

Don't let's talk about it.

BRETT
(gaily)

You said it! How about a little action?

He leans over and kisses her. For a moment she resists him, then her arms go around his neck.

VOICE

Sandwiches?

As they look up, Sally breaks away from him and runs out of scene, leaving him.

CUT TO:

135 REVERSE ANGLE

Two stewards—one carrying a tray of sandwiches, the other, a tray of bouillon—are standing before him. Brett is oblivious of their presence. The steward places a cup of bouillon and a sandwich in his hand.

They exit.

He comes out of his daze—notices the food in his hand and places it on rail by lifeboat.

PAN TO:

136 CLOSE SHOT OF LIFEBOAT

From the canvas covering of the lifeboat a head slowly appears. It is Ballinger (the man we saw drop the cop's uniform). He is gaunt and haggard. He looks around furtively. For a moment he looks down—sees the sandwich—reaches for it—brings it back into the lifeboat—and disappears.

FADE-OUT

FADE-IN

137 LONG SHOT—BOAT AT NIGHT

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

138 LONG SHOT—AUDITORIUM

The music is playing—a few couples are dancing—other people are being seated—stewards are looking in through windows.

CUT TO:

139 CLOSE-UP—LOTHER, ANYA, AND SUMMERS

In doorway—Brett is standing near by—Summers sees Brett.

SUMMERS

(looking toward Brett)

There's the chump—over there—

(He points)

LOTHER

(dubiously)

I wonder!

Lother, Anya, and Summers walk over to Brett.

SUMMERS

(to Brett)

How's your mother feeling?

BRETT

Much better—thank you—

LOTHER

How about a little game later?

BRETT

Fine—I'll be glad to.

CUT TO:

140 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—BRETT AND ANYA

Anya is wearing a thin bracelet (quite unlike the one she had been wearing in previous scenes). Brett notices this.

CUT TO:

141 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—BRETT

He reacts when he sees the bracelet as if an idea has just struck him.

BRETT

(to Anya)

Will you please excuse me? I'll be right back.

ANYA

We'll save you a place at our table.

BRETT

Thanks.

He exits.

CUT TO:

142 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—SHORTIE

He is standing by the window and sees Brett leaving. He follows Brett on to the deck.

WALKING SHOT

SHORTIE

(in an undertone)

What's up?

BRETT

The ice is in the storage.

CAMERA FOLLOWS Brett and Shortie to Anya's stateroom, where they stop

143 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—OUTSIDE ANYA'S STATEROOM DOOR.

Brett is glancing up and down corridor furtively.

BRETT

Keep a lookout, Shortie—

Brett takes a bunch of keys from his pocket—he inserts a key in the door and goes in.

CUT TO:

144 INTERIOR OF ANYA'S STATEROOM—LIGHT EFFECT

Brett starts to search for the bracelet.

CUT TO:

145 SHORTIE OUTSIDE—CAMERA SHOT DOWN CORRIDOR

QUICK CUT TO:

146 MCKINNEY—MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT

He sticks his head out of stateroom door—he is in evening dress with dress tie untied—he calls to Shortie.

MCKINNEY

Oh, boy!

CUT TO:

147 CLOSE-UP—SHORTIE

He turns toward McKinney and reacts nervously.

SHORTIE

(timidly)

Yes, sir.

He goes to McKinney. McKinney takes him by the arm without saying a word, and takes him into his room. Shortie is obviously scared to death. McKinney, slightly embarrassed, speaks softly.

MCKINNEY

Can you tie a bow tie?

SHORTIE

(trembling)

Yes, sir—

He starts fumbling with tie, and ties it very badly.

CUT TO:

148 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—BRETT

He has the bracelet which he puts in his pocket and starts to exit to exterior of room. Outside he looks for Shortie.

CUT TO:

149 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—MCKINNEY AND SHORTIE

They are coming out of McKinney's room. Brett sees them and starts down corridor toward auditorium.

MCKINNEY

(calling)

What's your hurry, young feller?

Brett turns. He stops and smiles. By this time McKinney has reached Brett's side.

BRETT

I'm going to the show—

MCKINNEY

(good-naturedly)

I'll go with you—

CUT TO:

150 AUDITORIUM—INTRODUCTION OF THE SONG ENTITLED *Oh, Leo* IS PLAYING

CUT TO:

151 STAGE—FRANK PARKER, MARY LIVINGSTON, AND JEAN SARGENT are singing verse of song. (The business for this number as worked out by Larry Ceballos.) Parker sings one verse and chorus and starts to sing a second chorus, but is interrupted by Denby's voice.

DENBY'S VOICE

Wait a minute—

CUT TO:

152 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—DENBY

He is carrying a baby spotlight—he stops the orchestra—

DENBY

(to orchestra)

That's enough, boys—

(then to Parker)

That was fine, Frank—you've already sung a verse and chorus, and everybody enjoyed it—I hope—Now I have a *good* idea—sit down, Frank, Mary, Jean.

The trio sits down.

Here's the idea—we're going to reverse things around here—you've entertained the audience, and now for a change they're going to entertain you—

(He turns to audience)

aren't we?—I'll sing the chorus up until I get to the words, "Oh, Leo," then I'll put the spotlight on some lady or gentleman, and whoever the lucky one might be, he or she will then sing the words, "Oh, Leo—Oh Leo—Oh Leo—Oh—"

Denby sings the best he can, which is bad enough.

DENBY

We'll try it once—(He addresses the orchestra). Play, boys!

The orchestra plays. Denby sings until he reaches "Oh Leo," then puts the spotlight on someone in the audience, and we

CUT TO:

153 CLOSE-UP—THAT SOMEONE

(*Note:* We continue this routine, in which we utilize all principals as well as outsiders.) The number concludes with entire audience singing song enthusiastically.

CUT TO:

154 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—PARKER, LIVINGSTON, AND SARGENT

They are applauding the audience.

CUT TO:

155 CLOSE-UP—DENBY

He also is applauding the audience—he is laughing and having a good time—he addresses the passengers.

DENBY

That was fine, folks—now we'll try it again.

Mary walks into scene and interrupts him.

MARY

Oh, Chad—what about the rest of the show?

DENBY

Oh,—I was having so much fun I almost forgot—

Mary, Parker, and Sargent take him by the arm and start to lead him off stage—as they do so he announces the next act while walking toward the wings.

DENBY

The next act will be Sally Marsh and her troupe of trained adagio dancers.

Denby exits with trio—orchestra starts introduction of *It Was Sweet of You.*

CUT TO:

156 MEDIUM SHOT—STAGE

The curtains part and Sally Marsh and Frank Parker appear.

CUT TO:

157 CLOSE SHOT—TABLE IN AUDITORIUM

Brett, Lother, Summers, Anya, and McKinney are seated around it—Frank Parker's voice comes over this scene. Anya is sitting between Brett and Lother—Brett is looking toward stage and beaming with pride as he looks at Sally.

CUT TO:

158 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—BACKSTAGE IN WINGS

Ned and Denby—Parker is still singing—

DENBY

Does she know Lother's aboard yet?

NED

No—but I'm going to tell her as soon as the act's finished.

CUT BACK TO:

159 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—TABLE IN AUDITORIUM

Where Anya, Lother, Brett, Summers, McKinney are sitting.

BRETT

(to Anya)

Isn't she lovely?

ANYA

Yes—and *very* popular—

(She glances meaningly at Lother)

Lother responds to the glance with a faint smile—by this time Parker has finished the song.

CUT TO:

160 CLOSE SHOT—STAGE

Where we see Sally quickly removing her dress and throwing it off stage—she is underdressed in her adagio dance costume. Ned and Hans enter for Adagio routine (*Note:* This will be staged by Larry Ceballos.) During the dance, the following dialogue is cut into the routine while dancing.

NED

What's the matter, Sally?—you're shaking.

SALLY

I'm all right.

NED

(anxiously)

You saw him sitting out there in front, didn't you?

SALLY

I was in his cabin—

NED

What!—are you crazy?

SALLY

I'll explain later—

NED

If he comes near you again, I'll break his neck—

They continue at a faster tempo which interrupts their dialogue. The music works up to a gradual increase in tempo for a whirlwind finish. (*Note:* This is to be determined by Ceballos.)

CUT TO:

161 LONG SHOT—AUDIENCE APPLAUDING

This shot is from behind, taking in stage and backs of people in audience.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

162 MEDIUM LONG SHOT—PASSENGERS DANCING

There is a perceptible rocking of the boat—individual orchestra specialties are also introduced here.

CUT TO:

163 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—TABLE IN AUDITORIUM

Where Brett, Summers, Anya, Lother, and McKinney are seated—dishes are now on the table, napkins, etc.

SUMMERS

Now that the entertainment is over, how about a little game of cards?

BRETT

(to McKinney)

Care to join us?

MCKINNEY

(smiling)

No, thanks—I never gambled in my life.

SUMMERS

(laughing)

You're lucky—out my way, in Montana, there's nothing else to do—

ANYA

(rising)

I'm going down to my cabin. I have to send a wireless—see you later.

Anya leaves. Lother rises—he addresses the group.

LOTHER

Excuse me, gentlemen—I'll see you at the card game—

CUT TO:

164 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—HERBERT ROSSON

In second-class buffet with three other men—they are seated at the table with drinks in front of them.

FIRST PASSENGER

(smiling)

All right—if you must know the truth—I'm going to Carlsbad for my health.

SECOND PASSENGER

(a Frenchman)

And, gentlemen—I'm going home, because my wife is going to have a baby.

THIRD PASSENGER

(embarrassed—speaks softly)

I'm on my honeymoon—

FIRST PASSENGER

(turns to Rosson)

How about you—why are you on the boat?

ROSSON

(has the glass almost to his lips when the question is asked—he calmly drinks—puts the glass down quietly, and earnestly says)

I'm going to kill a man.

He exits.

CUT TO:

165 CLOSE SHOT—REACTION OF OTHER THREE MEN

They look at Rosson and then at each other. There's a dead silence, for a moment.

FIRST PASSENGER

Was he kidding us?

CUT TO:

166 MEDIUM SHOT—OUTSIDE DOORWAY OF AUDITORIUM

The purser is standing there—Anya enters.

CUT TO:

167 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—ANYA

She is very nervous and excited—she addresses the purser.

ANYA

A very valuable bracelet of mine's been stolen!

PURSER

Where did you have it last?

ANYA

In my cabin. I didn't wear it this evening—when I went downstairs just now, I found the lock of my jewel box broken open.

By this time McKinney and Summers come up.

ANYA

(excitedly as she addresses them)

A bracelet's been stolen from my cabin!

MCKINNEY

Where is your cabin?

CUT TO:

168 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—TABLE IN AUDITORIUM

Brett—he looks off scene.

CUT TO:

169 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—SHORTIE

His eyes shift furtively from left to right, ascertaining that he is not being watched by anyone. He nods his head in the affirmative to Brett.

QUICK CUT BACK TO:

170 CLOSE SHOT—BRETT'S HAND UNDER TABLE

He takes bracelet from his pocket, wraps it up in a napkin and puts it on the table.

CUT BACK TO:

171 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—SHORTIE

He leaves the window—picks up a tray from a table near by and starts toward Brett's table. TRUCK WITH HIM up to table, as he starts to clear the dishes and pile them on to the tray, also taking napkins. A waiter enters and puts a halt to Shortie's activities.

WAITER

This is my job—you've got no business in here—

He takes the tray with the piled dishes, including the napkin which envelops the bracelet from Shortie, and starts away.

171A CAMERA PANS WITH SHORTIE AS HE FOLLOWS WAITER, who goes to chute where dirty linen is deposited. He lays the tray down and takes one of the five napkins on the tray and throws it down the chute,—he repeats this operation with two more napkins. Shortie almost faints—he takes a napkin from the tray and feels the weight of it quickly—satisfied that it contains nothing, he throws it down the chute and grabs the only remaining napkin off the tray. He readily realizes that this contains the bracelet and jams it quickly into his pocket and exits.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

172 MEDIUM SHOT—INTERIOR OF ANYA'S CABIN

Purser, Brett, Anya, McKinney.

BRETT

This is exciting—but if it's been stolen they can't get away with it on a ship—

MCKINNEY

Some of the smartest robberies have taken place aboard ships—

BRETT

It'll be very interesting to see how you go about solving this, Inspector—

MCKINNEY

Sorry—but I'm on a vacation—

BRETT

(to Anya)

If he let's you down I'll try my hand at sleuthing—

(Brett takes cigarette)

Bet I could find that bracelet—

MCKINNEY

(strikes a match)

I wouldn't be surprised—

The two men look at each other.

PURSER

Mrs. Rosson, was the bracelet insured?

ANYA

Yes—for $10,000—

PURSER

If you'll give me the details in the morning, we'll notify the insurance company—and rest assured if it's on the boat we'll locate it—

Purser exits.

BRETT

(to Anya)

I wouldn't worry about it—it'll turn up—

(to McKinney)

How about a nightcap, Inspector?

MCKINNEY

No, thanks—I'll take a walk around the deck and then turn in—

BRETT

Good night!

Brett exits.

ANYA

(to McKinney)

He's a nice boy—

MCKINNEY

Yes—he's very naïve—

He exits as Summers enters.

SUMMERS

Did you find it?

ANYA

No!—Did *you* take that bracelet?

SUMMERS

No-o!

ANYA

Where's Lother?

CUT TO:

173 MEDIUM SHOT—SALLY'S DRESSING ROOM

She is still in her adagio costume. Lother is present.

SALLY

(to Lother)

Do you mind getting out of here now—I want to change—

LOTHER

Go ahead—you didn't used to be so fussy—

SALLY

I've lost my taste for knickknacks—

LOTHER

Don't be a mug all your life—I'm trying to help you— —you need me more than I need you—have you figured they might pick the kid up in France and extradite him?

SALLY

Have you ever figured they might extradite you?

LOTHER

I'm not so clumsy with fingerprints—

There's a knock at the door. Sally goes quickly to it and half opens it—Brett is in the companionway—from his position he is unable to see Lother.

BRETT

Would you like to take a turn around the deck with me?

SALLY

(anxious to escape from Lother)

Yes—is it all right if I come like this?

(She grabs a cloak and goes out)

CUT TO:

174 WALKING SHOT—BRETT AND SALLY IN COMPANIONWAY

SALLY

This time I'm really glad you showed up.

BRETT

Lonesome?

SALLY

We'll let it go at that—

They exit from companionway.

CUT TO:

175 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—EXTERIOR OF SALLY'S DRESSING ROOM

Ned meets Lother coming out of Sally's cabin—he stops momentarily—then rushes into Sally's cabin—he sees that Sally is not there—he comes out quickly—

NED

(grabbing Lother by the arm)

What are you doing around here?

LOTHER

(very calmly)

Take it easy—you'll last longer—

Ned goes after Lother with a clenched fist.

NED

Why don't you leave Sally alone—you dirty—

Lother is too quick for Ned and hits him a terrific punch on the jaw, knocking him down. Lother then exits. Denby enters scene—he goes to Ned and helps him to his feet.

DENBY

(alarmed)

What happened to you?

NED

You've got a gun, haven't you, Chad? Will you let me have it?

DENBY

What for?

NED

Don't ask any questions—just give it to me.

DENBY

(trying to quiet him)

Easy kid—easy. . . .

(puts his hand on Ned's shoulder)

Come on—I want to talk to you.

He takes Ned by his arm and leads him away.

CUT TO:

176 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—SALLY AND BRETT ON DECK at the rail.

BRETT

(looking at moon)

That's a beautiful moon, Sally?

SALLY

(smiles sweetly)

What, again?

BRETT

(very seriously)

Yes—you know what I've been thinking, Sally?—

SALLY

What?—

BRETT

I think we'll live in Europe after we're married?

SALLY

(is speechless for a moment, then laughs)

I didn't *know* we were *going* to be married.

BRETT

You didn't?—I guess I forgot to tell you—

SALLY

You're a little ahead of yourself—the ususal routine would be for you to propose, and if I accept, then you'd give me an engagement ring—

BRETT

I'll give you plenty of rings as soon as I get the stones set—what do you think?

SALLY

I think we ought to walk.

They walk out of scene.

177 CAMERA PULLS BACK ON DECK—MEDIUM LONG SHOT

McKinney is walking along deck. He sees Sally and Brett—an idea has struck him—he immediately turns and goes the other way.

CUT TO:

178 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—DAN CAMPBELL, STAGGERING AND SINGING *Oh, Leo*

He sees McKinney suddenly, and reacts with a start—he then continues staggering down deck, singing, "Oh, Leo, Oh, Leo." He stops abruptly, and a frightened look replaces his happy smile.

CUT TO:

179 CLOSE-UP—WHAT HE SEES

Lifeboat—the canvas covering raises slowly, and Ballinger's haggard face is revealed.

CUT BACK TO:

180 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—DAN CAMPBELL

He stiffens up—turns on his heel, and makes a beeline for the barroom.

CUT TO:

180A CLOSE-UP—SHORTIE

In companionway—He sees McKinney go into Brett's room.

CUT TO:

181 MEDIUM SHOT—MCKINNEY IN BRETT'S ROOM

He is searching.

CUT TO:

182 CLOSE SHOT—MCKINNEY

Coming out of Brett's room and exiting toward deck.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

183 DECK

Where Brett and Sally are sauntering along, and are met by McKinney.

BRETT

(to McKinney)

Thought you were going to turn in, Inspector.

MCKINNEY

Nervous. Couldn't sleep. Feel like a nightcap?

(inviting them both)

SALLY

It's getting kind of chilly on deck. If you'll excuse me, I think I'll go to bed. Good night, Mr. McKinney!

MCKINNEY

Good night!

BRETT

(softly)

Good night, Mrs. Brett!

SALLY

Good night, idiot!

MCKINNEY

(to Brett)

How about you?

BRETT

No, thanks. I've promised to play cards.

MCKINNEY

You know what I'd do, if I were you—before the card game I'd go to the Purser's office.

BRETT

Why?

MCKINNEY

Well, someone else besides myself may have seen you in the vicinity of Mrs. Rosson's cabin this evening—even the stewards in that corridor insisted on being searched. Get me?

BRETT

Sure, I'll go.

McKINNEY

I'll go with you.

BRETT

Swell!

DISSOLVE TO:

184 PURSER'S OFFICE — McKINNEY, BRETT, AND PURSER

PURSER

Well, if you insist—

He runs his hands through Brett's pockets.

McKINNEY
(laughing)

It's easy to see the Purser hasn't had much practice.

BRETT
(smiling)

How about trying your fine Italian hand?

McKINNEY

This has nothing to do with me—
(He moves to Brett)
—but always remember, Purser, when you're searching anybody, take the lining of their coat, like this—
(He suits the action to the words)
—run your fingers all along these seams. . . . Then—back of the collar—*here*—that used to be a favorite trick—and never forget to put your finger down inside of the shoe—like this.

BRETT

Hey!—you're tickling me.

McKINNEY
(ignoring the interruption)

Then we run our hands down a man's arms and legs—like this—in case they got what you're looking for attached to a string.
(He stands off and surveys Brett, slightly disappointed)
See what I mean, Purser?

PURSER

Very interesting.

BRETT
(good-naturedly)

Well, I guess that's all—good night!

He flips them a salute and goes nonchalantly out.

PURSER

He's certainly good-natured.

McKINNEY

"Smooth's" the word.

PURSER

I mean—a lot of gentlemen would be offended if you searched them like that.

McKINNEY

(casually)

It all depends on what you're used to.

McKinney suddenly bangs his fist on the desk.

McKINNEY

Well, I'll be a son of a sea cook!

PURSER

What's the matter?

McKINNEY

Nothin—

(He pulls out his billfold and grins)

—I just remembered the name of a guy that owes me fifty bucks.

FADE-OUT

185 FADE-IN

BRETT'S CABIN—NEXT MORNING

Brett in bathing suit and dressing gown, talking to Shortie. Shortie is puffing a cigarette nervously.

SHORTIE

This is the first chance I've had to get away to tell you —McKinney was snooping around in this cabin last night.

BRETT

(smiling)

It's O. K., Shortie—it's still there. Better bring it in.

Shortie goes to porthole and puts his head through window.

CUT TO:

186 REVERSE ANGLE — SHORTIE'S HEAD THROUGH PORTHOLE

Stuck to the side of the ship with adhesive tape is the bracelet. As Shortie takes it and his head disappears,

CUT BACK TO:

187 INSIDE

SHORTIE

What're you goin' to do with it?

BRETT

(indicating porthole)

You keep it—

SHORTIE

(protesting)

Me!

BRETT

Sure! McKinney will never suspect you—

He moves toward door.

SHORTIE

(still protesting)

Say—wait a minute!

BRETT

(breezily)

See you later, Shortie—I'm off to the pool.

As Brett exits, Shortie takes bracelet and puts it in his shoe.

188 DOLLY SHOT IN CORRIDOR OUTSIDE

TRUCK AHEAD OF BRETT until we reach cigar and news stand. At the news stand buying books is McKinney. He has two books in his hand, making a decision on which one to buy. He looks up as he hears Brett speak.

BRETT

Large package of Luckies—Good morning, Inspector!

McKINNEY

Hello, young fellow!

BRETT

Coming to the pool for a swim?

McKINNEY

Nooooo!—going to catch up on my reading.

(to the store attendant as he hands him the money)

I'll take this one.

He puts a copy of *Monte Cristo* under his arm and drops the other book in front of Brett. As Brett looks at its title,

189 INSERT—BOOK:

Crime Doesn't Pay

190 MEDIUM SHOT—BRETT

He looks up from the book to the retreating McKinney, smiles, takes his cigarettes and commences to move out of scene.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

190A CORRIDOR

McKinney exits from cigar stand to where Chad Denby has been watching. Denby greets him with—

DENBY

Hello, Inspector—I hear your vacation's been spoiled. Somebody lost a bracelet.

McKINNEY

Yes, a bracelet's been lost, but I'm still on my vacation.

DENBY

I understand you searched Brett for it last night. By the way—what do you know about him?

McKINNEY

Well, I've seen him here and there. What's on your mind?

DENBY

Oh, nothing—only I wondered why you suspected him.

McKINNEY

Well, I'll tell you—we picked him up about a year ago—but could never pin anything on him.

DENBY

Maybe he just travels in bad company.

McKINNEY

Yeah—

He exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

191 BRETT AND ANYA IN THE POOL AT THE SHALLOW END.

It is crowded with many beautiful girls in colorful bathing suits. People are diving in and out of the water—huge colored balls are being thrown—the usual hilarity of a crowded pool.

BRETT

(anxiously)

Tell me—did you find your bracelet?

ANYA

No—I'm furious!—Nobody seems to do anything about it—

BRETT

(with an ingratiating smile)

Why worry? It was insured—how about that swimming lesson I promised you?

By now they are just about up to their waists in water. He starts to teach her to swim—his hand is under her chin.

BRETT

Strike out harder with your feet—now exhale as your arms go back.

He holds Anya up as she strikes out.

CUT TO:

192 OTHER END OF POOL—SEMICLOSE SHOT—SALLY

She has just arrived. She throws off her wrap and she looks very fetching in her bathing suit. She sees Brett smile and waves.

CUT TO:

193 BRETT

He has just seen her—forgets Anya and goes quickly toward Sally. Anya, without his support, promptly sinks. He goes back, stands her on her feet, mumbles an apology, and swims quickly toward the other end of the pool.

CUT TO:

194 SALLY DIVES IN

Brett just coming out of the water.

195 SALLY AND BRETT

BRETT

I thought you were never coming—

SALLY

(looking in the direction of Anya)

I could see you were pining away—

BRETT

Oh, that's Mrs. Rosson—remember, you met her yesterday?

SALLY

(drily)

Yes—I remember—

They sit on the side of the pool and dangle their feet.

SALLY

(after a pause)

How well do you know her?

BRETT

(casually)

Just met her on the boat—supposed to play bridge with her yesterday—but she wouldn't—so we played poker instead.

SALLY

(with a start)

Who with?

BRETT

A Mr. Summers and a man called Lother.

SALLY

Oh, you infant! How much did you lose?

BRETT

Lose?—I won a little—

SALLY

That was the come-on—promise me you won't play with them again—

BRETT

(quickly)

What do you know about them?

SALLY

Too much—Remember—I warned you about me—

(She looks him straight in the eye)

I used to be Lee Lother's girl—

BRETT

You can live that down, can't you?

SALLY

He's a con man—crooked as a tree—and I was part of the racket—helped him!

(She throws head back and looks at him)

Now—if you have an appointment elsewhere—I'll excuse you!

She dives off edge of pool and Brett swims after her.

BRETT

(catches up to her)

You can't lose me, Sally—I'm no lily myself!

SALLY

(half to herself)

I'm beginning to think you're a pretty swell guy.

BRETT

(avoiding her eyes)

Come on—let's take a swim.

As they start to rise.

CUT TO:

196 BRETT AND SALLY AS THEY DIVE

Short underwater sequence which is very graceful.

CUT TO:

197 STEWARDS' GLORY HOLE

Shortie, limping, takes a quick look around to make sure he's not observed and commences to take bracelet from his shoe.

CUT TO:

198 OTHER END OF ROOM

Hidden from Shortie's view by a locker, is another steward. He glances casually toward Shortie, sees bracelet, looks surprised, and takes a step forward.

STEWARD

Blime!—wot's that yer got?

SHORTIE

(moving toward door)

Nothin'.

STEWARD

(increasing his pace)

Let me look at it.

SHORTIE

(moving away from him faster)

Ain't got time.

STEWARD

(moves quickly toward him)

Hey—you! Where you going?

CUT TO:

199 FULL SHOT

There is only one thing for Shortie to do. He beats it, pursued by steward out of room onto deck.

CUT TO:

200 SHORTIE RUNNING ALONG DECK PURSUED BY STEWARD

Campbell staggers out of bar as Shortie runs by him. The pursuing steward grazes Campbell's shoulder and swings him around. He goes back to the bar for a drink.

201 SHORTIE RUSHING DOWN STEPS FROM "A" DECK—

Closely pursued by steward. He throws a terrified glance over his shoulder. The steward is shouting at him to stop. At the bottom of the steps is the quartermaster.

STEWARD

Stop him! Stop him! He's got the bracelet!

Shortie manages to elude quartermaster and runs toward pool, pursued by quartermaster and steward. He rushes through the crowd to the edge of the pool, his eyes searching wildly for Brett. Quartermaster and steward arrive and make a grab for Shortie.

CUT TO:

202 CLOSE SHOT—BRETT'S HEAD

Appearing above water. He takes in the situation.

CUT TO:

203 SHORTIE

He dives into pool.

CUT TO:

204 UNDERWATER SHOT

Brett swims to him. Shortie pulls the bracelet out of his pocket. Brett grabs it and tucks it in his trunks. Shortie rises to the surface. Brett swims under water toward opposite end of the pool.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

205 PURSER'S OFFICE—SHORTIE (DRIPPING WET). As-

sistant Purser, Steward, and Quartermaster.
Shortie's wet shoes are on the desk.

Shortie

I tell yuh I ain't got no bracelet—

Steward

(threateningly—pointing to shoes)

I saw him take the bracelet out of that shoe.

Shortie

Yer crazy!—I ain't got no bracelet.

Steward

Then why did you run away?

Shortie

(innocently)

Because you ran after me.

Lap Dissolve to:

206 Medium Shot—Deck of Boat

There are several young ladies (probably six or eight). They are dressed either in sport dresses or athletic shorts and blouses or in the dresses they would ordinarily wear on board ship. They are all lined up at the starting line, ready for a "Horse Race." Each of the girls has a boy (or man) for a partner. The idea is this:

The men place their hands on the deck and the ladies take hold of their feet, while the men move forward being partially pushed by the ladies wheelbarrow fashion. All principals are participants and a Pan Shot discloses Dan Campbell and Sally Marsh as an entry.

Cut to:

207 Medium Close—Denby

He is the starter and has full charge. All the contestants are smiling and chatting merrily in anticipation of the coming race. We hear their merriment coming in over Denby's close-up.

Denby

(addresses contestants)

Take your places, folks. The winner of this horse race will be presented with a handsome autographed ocean wave.

CUT TO:

208 MEDIUM SHOT

They are all lined up à la wheelbarrow. Their positions will naturally be funnier than can be described here.

CUT TO:

209 MEDIUM CLOSE—SALLY AND DAN

Sally is having extreme difficulty with her horse (Dan). His arms collapse and he falls flat on his face.

SALLY

(complaining. She yells to Denby)

I want a new horse. His front legs are full of rubber.

Denby enters scene.

DENBY

(looking at Dan)

Come on, get up.

(He imitates the sound a driver uses to urge his horse with—then to Sally)

That horse is carrying too much of a load.

DAN

(lifting his face from the deck)

Who won?

DENBY

Well, you got the first down—there's one more to go. Come on, we're ready to start right now. Come on. Just keep stiff.

DAN

I was never stiffer in my life.

DENBY

(addresses everybody with a laugh)

All right, folks, get on your mark. When you hear the pistol shot—

He reaches for his gun but discovers that it is not in his pocket.

DENBY

(apologetically)

I forgot my gun.

(He takes his pocket handkerchief instead)
I'll drop this handkerchief instead—
Get ready—One!—Two!—Three!
He drops handkerchief—the race starts.

CUT TO:

210 MEDIUM LONG SHOT
The passengers watching and cheering their favorites.

CUT TO:

211 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT

BRETT
Come on, Sally.
(excitedly)
Bet you a hundred dollars she wins!

MCKINNEY
Wouldn't bet against her.
(A pause)
Tell you what I will do—bet you I find that bracelet before we hit France.
(Brett gives him a side glance as he continues drily)
Not a hundred, though—just fifty.

BRETT
That's a bet—come on, Sally!

212 CUT OF FAT DAME (GAG)

CUT TO:

213 FINISHING LINE
We see the finish of the race. Dan Campbell slides over the finish line on his nose.

DENBY
The winner, Sally Marsh! And—
(He raises Sally's hand)
—Dan Campbell—
(He pulls a sliver out of Dan's nose)
—wins by a sliver!

CUT TO:

214 MEDIUM CLOSE—DECK

MCKINNEY
(watching Sally)
Nice girl, that—

(looking at Brett)

I'd hate to see *her* get a raw deal.

(as he fills his pipe)

You know, the great trouble with crooks is they're *too* smart. Now if I'd taken that bracelet, I'd find some way to slip it back—I'd know I could never get ashore with it.

BRETT

(with assumed casualness)

Anybody that's taken the trouble to get it would be a mug to put it back.

CAMERA PANS TO THE RACE. Sally is smiling over at Brett. CAMERA SWINGS TO HIM. A hand taps him on the shoulder. He looks up. CAMERA PANS WITH HIM. Lother is standing behind him.

LOTHER

Could I see you a minute?

BRETT

Sure!

(He rises)

Excuse me.

215 CROWD CUT—SALLY ACCLAIMED

CUT TO:

216 MCKINNEY AND SALLY

MCKINNEY

Congratulations.

SALLY

Exciting, wasn't it? Where's Jimmy?

MCKINNEY

He'll be back.

(suddenly)

What would you do if anybody gave you a bracelet?

SALLY

(laughing)

Say, "Thanks very much!"

MCKINNEY

I mean if you knew it were stolen.

SALLY

Well, of course, I wouldn't take it.

McKinney

And if you liked the person, you'd naturally persuade him to give it back and go straight, wouldn't you?

Sally

Sure I would—but I don't get what you're driving at.

McKinney

Maybe you will after you've thought it over.

He exits.

Cut to:

217 **Bar**

Brett, Lother, and Summers drinking—apparently quite affable.

Lother

(gently)

Well—when are we going to have our little poker game?

Brett

Well, to tell you the truth, gentlemen, I've sworn off playing poker.

Summers

(reproachfully)

Why, you wouldn't quit when you're ahead, would you?

Brett

Why isn't that a good time to quit?

Lother

(reproachfully)

No gentleman would do that.

Brett

I agree with you—no *gentleman* would—But *I* would—

(He smiles cheerfully and continues)

—especially when my opponents have taken the precaution of marking the cards.

Lother and Summers look at each other in amazement.

Summers

I thought you were a sucker—

Brett

(pleasantly)

Think again—

Lother

(flatly)

In that case—you owe us exactly sixteen hundred dollars.

Brett

Oh, no—I played with *your* cards—in *your* cabin—at *your* suggestion—If you've got a kick coming, make it to the Purser.

Lother

(in deadly, even tone)

I'm making it to you. If I don't get it by tonight—you'll find it a *rough* voyage.

Summers

(grimly)

That goes two ways.

Brett

Make it three, boys—I'll play this hand pat.

Lother

And I'll lay odds *you* got that bracelet.

Brett

(unperturbed)

I'll lay odds you get a pair of 'em—Why, a high-school kid could take you saps—and another thing—Lay off Sally Marsh.

(He laughs in Summer's face)

—"Honest Jack"! One look at your mug and the whole world buttons up its pockets.

He exits.

FADE-OUT

218 FADE-IN

STEWARD BLOWING THE DINNER BUGLE. NIGHT BACKGROUND. (FOG EFFECT THROUGH SEQUENCE.)

CUT TO:

219 LIFEBOAT

The sound of the bugle blowing is still coming over SOUND TRACK. Ballinger climbs cautiously out—jumps to the ground, and stretches his cramped limbs. Taking the protection of the shadows he moves stealthily toward steps.

DISSOLVE TO:

220 MEDIUM SHOT—BARBER SHOP

Ballinger enters in evening clothes—gets into barber's chair.

BARBER

Quite a growth, sir—been seasick?

As barber leans him back in chair—

BALLINGER

Yes—leave the moustache on—

221 DOLLY BACK TO INCLUDE ANOTHER CHAIR

Which the barber pulls to upright position, disclosing McKinney sitting there. McKinney glances over and notices Ballinger.

CUT TO:

222 CLOSE-UP—MCKINNEY

Recognizing Ballinger—as he looks at Ballinger, barber puts hot towel over Ballinger's face. By this time the other barber is finished with McKinney, who pays him and exits.

CUT TO:

223 EXTERIOR OF BARBER SHOP

Steward going by McKinney—

MCKINNEY

Boy—let me have that radiogram blank—

Steward gives him pencil and blank—he starts to write—

CUT TO:

224 INSERT

"Chief of Detectives—New York City—

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

225 MEDIUM SHOT—DINING ROOM

Ballinger dressed in tuxedo, glances around, and sinks into seat at table near door—Steward comes in.

STEWARD

Pardon me, sir—that table's reserved—

BALLINGER

(in husky voice)

I've been in my cabin—ill—this is the first time I've come to the dining room.

STEWARD

(indicating next table)

You can sit over here tonight, sir—I'll have the Chief Steward allot you a table tomorrow—

Ballinger goes over—sits down—and Steward hands him a menu. As he is looking at menu, CAMERA PANS AROUND TO DOOR. McKinney enters unseen by Ballinger, and quietly goes around palm tree, and seats himself at table.

CUT TO:

226 CAMPBELL'S CABIN—

Campbell in his underwear is excitedly gesticulating to a steward.

CAMPBELL

I tell you—my dress clothes have been stolen!—

STEWARD

(amazed)

—but I laid 'em out on that bed for you, sir!

CAMPBELL

(raving)

I know you did! I went to take a shower and when I came back they'd gone—even the shoes.

DISSOLVE TO:

226-A CLOSE-UP

Brett and Sally kissing. They step apart, showing us Denby, frowning as he watches in background. CAMERA DRAWS BACK TO CLOSE SHOT Sally as Denby comes into scene, watching Brett as he goes off.

DENBY

Serious?

SALLY

Yes.

DENBY

Very serious?

SALLY

(soberly)

Very—

Denby frowns.

SALLY

Why—don't you like him?

DENBY

Of course—but—

(breaks off as he changes his manner)

There's your cue—hurry up—

He watches her run out of scene as Lother enters to him.

CUT TO:

227 MEDIUM CLOSE — BACKSTAGE — DENBY AND LOTHER

Actors going on stage which we do not see. Parker's voice singing *Sweet of You* can be heard. Lother walks into Denby who is standing in wings.

(Scene played quietly)

LOTHER

(affably)

Say, Denby—how soon before Sally'll be through? I've got a date with her.

DENBY

(wise to him)

I'll give you another chance to tell the truth, Lother.

LOTHER

(innocently)

What do you mean?

DENBY

(quietly)

Why don't you be a good little boy and leave her alone?

LOTHER

Oh—I understand you were an important part of her education when she came to New York.

DENBY

(softly, with a smile)

I just tried to show her the difference between the squirrels and the skunks.

LOTHER

(narrowing his eyes)

Meaning what?

DENBY

(evenly)

You don't shoot squirrels.

DISSOLVE TO:

228 HERBERT ROSSON'S CABIN

Jealousy has driven him to despair. He is the victim of his own imagination. A half-empty whisky bottle and glass are close at hand. The clock on the dressing table discloses the time—11:30. Rosson is a very different individual from the quiet businessman we met on the dock. He goes to his valise, takes out a revolver, loads it carefully, and starts to leave cabin.

DISSOLVE TO:

228-A BACKSTAGE

The music comes to a finish. Denby exits out of scene applauding à la master of ceremonies, to announce next act. CAMERA STAYS ON LOTHER—Denby's voice and the applause of the audience can be heard.

Sally runs through MEDIUM SHOT of Lother. He sees her and calls.

LOTHER

Oh, Sally!

He follows her.

CUT TO:

229 MEDIUM SHOT—LOTHER AND SALLY

Sally is still in her costume.

LOTHER

Are you going to meet the blonde?

SALLY

(anxious to get away from him)

That's my affair.

Lother takes her by the arm.

LOTHER

I know he is. You change those clothes and then come to my cabin. I'll expect you around twelve o'clock.

SALLY

(as she jerks her arm away from him)

Not a chance—I'm through.

(She exits quickly in the direction of her cabin)

CUT TO:

230 CLOSE-UP OF LOTHER—
He looks after her and then grimly walks out in the direction she has taken

CUT TO:

230-A MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT
Brett as Sally enters to him

SALLY

I'll change and be with you in ten minutes.

BRETT

Make it five.

SALLY

Seven-fifty. Positively my last offer.

BRETT

(laughing)

I'll be waiting on deck.

231 COMPANIONWAY—EXTERIOR OF SALLY'S CABIN
Sally opens the door and enters.

(Through this scene a foghorn blows)

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

232 INTERIOR CHARTHOUSE—(exactly as in Scene 14)
CLOSE SHOT—OFFICER'S HAND—
Still pointing to New York. Slowly he retraces the course.

FIRST NAVIGATION OFFICER'S VOICE

. . . dead on time as we passed the point light—

(His finger hesitates a moment then continues)

—twenty-four hours ago—38°, 41°—

(His finger continues to trace forward)

—and here we are off the southeastern point of Newfoundland—fifty-eight hours out—

His voice is lost as the ship's siren blows a long, low blast.

DISSOLVE TO:

233 MAN POUNDING ON DOOR (THE SAME MAN WE SAW IN OPENING OF PICTURE)
He is in exactly the same position, at the same door.

CUT TO:

234 LONG SHOT—SHOW HEADS OF PASSENGERS STARTING TO APPEAR IN COMPANIONWAY FROM THEIR CABINS—

Purser, Officers, Captain start to gather around door, all talking excitedly.

CAPTAIN

(pounding on door, yells)

Open the door!

CUT TO:

235 INTERIOR OF SALLY'S CABIN—CLOSE-UP OF SALLY

Terrified she goes to door and opens it, letting them in. They see the dead man. React.

CUT TO:

236 CLOSE-UP OF DEAD MAN ON FLOOR

CUT TO:

237 CLOSE-UP REACTION OF CAPTAIN AND PASSENGERS CROWDED IN THE DOORWAY OF SALLY'S CABIN

CAPTAIN

(to Sally)

What happened?

SALLY

He followed me into my cabin, locked the door and as he started to come toward me I heard two shots—That's all I know—

At this point—

CUT TO:

238 LONG SHOT—SHOOTING TOWARD DOOR—

McKinney comes in through the group to the Captain.

CAPTAIN

(to McKinney)

Inspector, for the first time in the history of this line a passenger has been murdered. Won't you please take charge?

CUT TO:

239 CLOSE-UP OF MCKINNEY

He thinks—then suddenly turns and dashes out of the room.

CUT TO:

239-A OUTSIDE BAR—

Dan just coming out as McKinney runs by. Dan turns and goes back into bar.

CUT TO:

240 LONG SHOT—COMPANIONWAY

FOLLOW MCKINNEY DOWNSTAIRS INTO ENGINE ROOM.

CUT TO:

241 LONG SHOT OF ENGINE ROOM

McKinney enters—draws gun from his pocket—cautiously goes to corner of engine room (secluded spot)

CUT TO:

242 CLOSE-UP OF MAN—HIS BACK TO CAMERA—ASLEEP—

CUT TO:

243 LONGER SHOT—

McKinney cautiously approaches the sleeping figure, sticks gun in his back:

MCKINNEY

All right, Joe. Get up out of there.

The man stands up and turns around. We see it is Ballinger—in the same tuxedo he wore in previous scenes.

McKinney searches him—takes revolver from his side pocket.

MCKINNEY

Where'd you get it?

BALLINGER

Lifted it out of a guy's cabin last night.

MCKINNEY

(gruffly)

What did you want a gun for?

BALLINGER

Stick-up. Needed dough to get ashore.

MCKINNEY

Is that why you killed Lee Lother?

BALLINGER

Guess again, copper.

MCKINNEY

Get moving—

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

243-A OUTSIDE BAR

Dan is just coming out of the bar again as McKinney, holding his gun toward Ballinger passes. Dan turns and staggers back into the bar.

CUT TO:

244 INTERIOR SALLY'S CABIN—GROUP AS BEFORE—

McKinney enters with Ballinger, who is now handcuffed.

CUT TO:

245 CLOSE-UP MCKINNEY AND BALLINGER

MCKINNEY

All right, spill it!

Ballinger looks down at dead man—

BALLINGER

I didn't do it.

CUT TO:

246 LONGER SHOT—GROUP

CAPTAIN

(to McKinney)

Who is he?

MCKINNEY

A rat with a long tail.

(giving orders to two ship's officers)

Take him below—I'll get back to him later.

(He turns to the passengers)

I'll have to ask you all to leave.

CUT TO:

247 TWO-SHOT—MCKINNEY AND CAPTAIN

MCKINNEY

Captain, I want you to get the following passengers in your office—

LAP DISSOLVE:

248 FADE-IN

THE PURSER'S OFFICE

The lights of the cabin are burning. The ship has run into a dense fog. Throughout the following scene the screaming of the siren is heard intermittently. Sally is seated facing McKinney, her face drawn after a sleepless night. McKinney also looks tired. He has undone his tie and loosened his collar. Now that he is back in harness he doesn't spare himself.

SALLY

That's the truth—every single word!

McKINNEY

I sincerely hope so—

SALLY

Why should *I* kill him?

McKINNEY

(drily)

For a very excellent reason from your own admission—

(quickly)

—I'm not saying you *did*—but I think you know more than you're telling. Years of experience have taught me to mistrust circumstantial evidence. Nevertheless, in your case there's plenty of it.

Quartermaster enters with Brett. Brett quickly crosses to Sally—puts his hand on her shoulder.

BRETT

Thought you might need me—don't talk, kid, and don't let him scare you—

(He points to McKinney)

McKINNEY

Don't be *too* smart, Jimmy—you're out in the rough yourself. You had an argument with Lother a couple of hours before he was killed—but I'll deal with that later—

CUT TO:

249 FULL SHOT—McKINNEY AND SUMMERS

McKINNEY

(turns to Summers)

Where were you when the murder happened?

SUMMERS

In my cabin playing solitaire.

McKinney

Oh, you couldn't get a friendly little poker game together, eh?

(He turns to Ned)

McKinney

Still sticking to the same story, Marsh?

Ned

Yes, Yes!

McKinney

You didn't have a gun in your hand last night?

Ned

No!

McKinney

S'pose you've never thought of killing him—

Ned

I wouldn't say that—

(emotionally)

I'm glad he's dead—yes—I'd thought of killing him—but I didn't—

McKinney

Why?

Ned

Because I was yellow, I guess—

Brett

(warningly)

Don't get yourself all worked up—

McKinney

(to Brett)

You keep out of this—

(quickly—to Ned)

You admit you thought of killing him—how were you going to do it?

Ned

I tried to borrow a gun from Chad, but—

McKinney

(as he rises)

This is interesting—

(turns quickly to Denby)

Why didn't you tell me you gave this kid your gun last night?

DENBY

I didn't—

McKINNEY

(quickly)

He asked for a loan of it, didn't he?

DENBY

Yes—but I didn't give it to him—

McKINNEY

(smiles—takes gun he got from Ballinger out of his pocket)

Is this your gun?

DENBY

(surprised at seeing gun—examine it closely)

Yes!

McKinney nods.

McKINNEY

Mmmmmmmmmhm. . . .

(He turns to Brett)

Now, Jimmy, what were you doing in that corridor before the shots were fired?

BRETT

(stalling)

Why, I—

DENBY

Just before the shots! Why, he was with me—backstage—we ran down together when we heard them.

Both McKinney and Brett look at him in amazement.

CUT TO:

250 LONG SHOT—DOOR BURSTS OPEN

A steward enters—he is *very* excited.

STEWARD

(He is white)

The lady in cabin—has been killed!

McKINNEY

Are you sure?—

This scene is shot so that the door in the background is not in the picture—we hear a voice say—

VOICE

That's right, Inspector!—

CAMERA PANS OVER TO DOORWAY

251 CLOSE-UP—ROSSON

ROSSON

(calmly)

She's dead!—I killed *Lother* too!

As Inspector, Captain, and Officers go to him—we—

CUT TO:

251-A CLOSE SHOT—DENBY—NED—SALLY

Denby enters scene where Ned is standing with his arm around Sally,

DENBY

Take her to her cabin—she's all in.

CUT TO:

251-AA CLOSE SHOT CORNER OF PURSER'S OFFICE—BRETT AND DENBY—

BRETT

Thanks for establishing an alibi for me. If that guy hadn't confessed I would have been on the grill plenty, and I don't think I could have weathered it. Get me? Any time I can do *you* a favor don't hesitate to ask for it.

DENBY

I won't—I'll ask for one right now.

(turns and looks Brett up and down)

Sally tells me she's in love with you.

BRETT

She did?

DENBY

(continuing)

Yes—but don't ask me why—because I could never tell you. I don't know what most guys want out of life—but *that* would be enough for me—I wouldn't care about—easy money—or—showing off my smart brains—I'd just like to live *my* life so nothing I did would bounce back and ruin *hers*—Do I make myself clear?

BRETT

(soberly)

Very clear. That's one favor I'll be glad to do you.

DENBY

(offering his hand)

O.K., kid—

(They shake hands)

I'm only sorry for one thing.

BRETT

What's that?

DENBY

If you hadn't agreed—I was going to throw you overboard—

(sighs)

Brett grins and leaves him.

As he walks away, Shortie comes up to Brett.

SHORTIE

(nervously)

Hello, Jimmy. What's up?

BRETT

Listen, Runt—Quick! Where's the ice?

SHORTIE

(nervously)

Why—I—er thought with all this heat turned on I'd hide it.

BRETT

Where did you hide it?

SHORTIE

On the drunk.

BRETT

Get it!

Shortie exits.

CUT TO:

251-B MEDIUM SHOT—DAN—STAGGERING DOWN CORRIDOR.

Shortie follows him.

CUT TO:

251-C SECTION OF DECK OUTSIDE PURSER'S OFFICE—CLOSE SHOT—CAPTAIN OF SHIP AND MCKINNEY

CAPTAIN

Well, Inspector—now that that's over—you can go back to your vacation.

McKINNEY

Not quite yet. There's still a loose bracelet floating around here somewhere.

DISSOLVE TO:

252 CLOSE-UP—BRACELET

CAMERA DOLLIES BACK TO BRETT AND SALLY

BRETT

There comes a time in every guy's life when he has to stand off and take a look at himself. I've been doing that tonight—and what I saw is pretty phony.

He shows her the bracelet.

BRETT

Now you know.

(repeating her words)

If you have an appointment elsewhere—I'll excuse you.

She looks at him for a moment.

McKINNEY'S VOICE

Sorry to intrude.

Brett hastily puts bracelet in his pocket.

McKinney comes into scene.

McKINNEY

Soon as I get that bracelet back I'm going to relax. Wish the guy that borrowed it would help me out—I got to win that fifty bucks.

SALLY

I've got a hunch you're going to win that bet, Inspector.

McKINNEY

I hope so. Well, I guess you two can do without me. I'll be seeing you.

CUT TO:

253 MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT—BRETT AND SALLY

BRETT

I'm going to return the bracelet right now and face the consequences.

SALLY

Jimmy!

His hand goes to his pocket.

BRETT

Well, I'll be—!!!

SALLY

What's the matter?

They both re-act seriously and look off down the deck.

CUT TO:

254 MEDIUM SHOT—MCKINNEY

BACK TO CAMERA is walking down the deck. We catch a flash of the bracelet as he tosses it in the air.

BRETT'S VOICE

Hey—wait a minute!

Quickly McKinney slips the bracelet into his pocket. Brett comes into the setup. Silently he takes a roll of money from his pocket, peels off a fifty and hands it to McKinney with a quiet look.

BRETT

Here's your fifty.

MCKINNEY

Thanks. That makes us square.

Sally enters scene. McKinney grins and moves off. CAMERA PANS WITH HIM.

MCKINNEY

Next time I get a vacation I'll spend it at headquarters. Good-night.

CUT TO:

254-A CLOSE-UP—SALLY AND BRETT WATCHING HIM

SALLY

He's a swell person. He told me he'd rather turn one guy straight than jug a million.

CUT TO:

255 QUICK FLASH—THE SHOW GOING ON

Chorus, fast tempo, etc.

SUPERIMPOSE Denby at microphone.

Denby

This is the Transatlantic Merry-Go-Round program signing off—station W-A-V-E—Chad Denby speaking.

Mary

(interrupting)

Oh, Mr. Denby, I wrote a poem about a bracelet—

Denby

Good-night, folks.

THE END

APPENDIX

LIST OF FOREMOST STUDIOS

CHARLES CHAPLIN STUDIO, 1416 North La Brea Avenue, Hollywood, Calif.

CHESTERFIELD-INVINCIBLE PICTURES (Independent), c/o Pathe Studio, Culver City, Calif.

COLUMBIA PICTURES, 1438 Gower Street, Hollywood, Calif.

DARMOUR PICTURES (Independent), 5823 Santa Monica Boulevard, Hollywood.

FIRST NATIONAL PICTURES, Burbank, Calif.

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER, Culver City, Calif.

PARAMOUNT PICTURES, 5451 Marathon Street, Hollywood.

REPUBLIC PICTURES, 4024 Radford Avenue, North Hollywood, Calif.

RKO-RADIO PICTURES, 780 Gower Street, Hollywood.

TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX, Westwood Hills, Los Angeles, Calif.

UNITED ARTISTS, 1041 North Formosa Street, Hollywood.

UNIVERSAL PICTURES, Universal City, Calif.

WALTER WANGER PRODUCTIONS, 1040 North Las Palmas Avenue, Hollywood.

WARNER BROS. PICTURES, Burbank, Calif.

MISCELLANEOUS ADDRESSES

Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (the Hays office), 28 West 44th Street, New York, N. Y.

Association of Motion Picture Producers (western Hays office), 5504 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood.

American Society of Cinematographers, 6331 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood.

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 1680 North Vine Street, Hollywood.

Actor's Equity Association, 6636 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood.

Screen Writers' League, 1680 Vine Street, Hollywood.

National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Society of Motion Picture Engineers, 33 West 42d Street, New York.

American Dramatists, 9 East 38th Street, New York.

American Society of Composers (Musical), 1501 Broadway, New York.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to make acknowledgment to the *Film Year Book* and the *Motion Picture Almanac* as valuable sources of reference.

FILM CREDITS

For films quoted or prominently mentioned in this volume.
(Listed alphabetically.)

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Alice Adams 30
- An RKO-Radio Picture
- Produced by Pandro S. Berman
- Directed by George Stevens
- From novel by Booth Tarkington
- Screen play by Jane Murfin, Dorothy Yost, Mortimer Offner
- Featuring Katharine Hepburn, Fred MacMurray

Captain Hurricane 42
- An RKO-Radio Picture
- Produced by Frank O'Heron
- Directed by John S. Robertson
- From novel by Sarah Ware Bassett
- Screen play by Josephine Lovett
- Featuring James Barton, Helen Westley, Helen Mack

Caravan 44
- A Fox Picture
- Produced by Robert T. Kane
- Directed by Erik Charell
- From novel *Gypsy Melody* by Melchior Lengyel
- Screen play and dialogue by Samson Raphaelson
- Continuity by Robert Liebman
- Featuring Charles Boyer, Loretta Young

Hold 'Em Yale 46
- A Paramount Picture
- Produced by Charles R. Rogers
- Directed by Sidney Lanfield
- From story by Damon Runyan
- Screen play by Paul Gerard Smith and Eddie Welch
- Featuring Patricia Ellis, Cesar Romero, William Frawley

INFORMER, THE 70
An RKO-Radio Picture
Produced by Cliff Reid
Directed by John Ford
From novel by Liam O'Flaherty
Screen play by Dudley Nichols
Featuring Victor McLaglen, Preston Foster, Margot Graham, Wallace Ford

IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT 26
A Columbia Picture
Directed by Frank Capra
From story by Samuel Hopkins Adams
Screen play by Robert Riskin
Featuring Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert

MAN WHO RECLAIMED HIS HEAD, THE 39
A Universal Picture
Produced by Henry Henigson
Directed by Edward Ludwig
Author, Jean Bart
Screen play by Jean Bart and Samuel Ornitz
Featuring Claude Rains, Joan Bennett, Lionel Atwill

MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY 25
An M-G-M Picture
Produced by Irving Thalberg
Directed by Frank Lloyd
From book by Charles Nordhoff, James Norman Hall
Screen play by Talbot Jennings, Jules Furthman, Carey Wilson
Featuring Charles Laughton, Clark Gable, Franchot Tone

POWER AND THE GLORY, THE 34
A Fox Picture
Directed by William K. Howard
Author, Preston Sturges
Screen play by Preston Sturges
Featuring Spencer Tracy, Colleen Moore, Helen Vinson

ROAR OF THE DRAGON 191
An RKO-Radio Picture
Directed by Wesley Ruggles
Authors, George K. Turner, Merian C. Cooper, Jane Bigelow

Screen play by Howard Estabrook
Featuring Richard Dix, Gwili Andre

SMILIN' THROUGH 28
An M-G-M Picture
Produced by Irving Thalberg
Directed by Sidney Franklin
Authors, Jane Cowl, Jane Murfin
Screen play by Ernest Vajda, Claudine West
Dialogue by Donald Ogden Stewart, James Bernard Fagan
Featuring Norma Shearer, Fredric March, Leslie Howard

STREET SCENE 23
A United Artists Picture
Produced by Samuel Goldwyn
Directed by King Vidor
From play by Elmer Rice
Screen play by Elmer Rice

TALE OF TWO CITIES, A 70
An M-G-M Picture
Produced by David O. Selznick
Directed by Jack Conway
From novel by Charles Dickens
Screen play by W. P. Lipscomb, S. N. Behrman
Featuring Ronald Colman, Elizabeth Allan

TILL WE MEET AGAIN 49
A Paramount Picture
Produced by Albert Lewis
Directed by Robert Florey
From story by Alfred Davis
Adaptation by Morton Barteaux
Screen play by Edwin Justus Mayer, Brian Marlow, Franklin Coen
Featuring Herbert Marshall, Gertrude Michael

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